REVI-LONA

A Romance of Love in a Marvelous Land

BY

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This book has been written in a plain, straight-forward and truthful manner, to tell how a big and brawny man, with many of the vices of his sex and years and a few of the virtues, went from the backwoods of Pennsylvania to the South Pole of the Earth and found, in a volcanic or hot-water wilderness, an isolated oasis of tropic warmth and rare fertility, containing strange survivals from a bygone geologic age, and inhabited by a remnant of a former continental people, enlightened, white-skinned and of surpassing beauty, but voiceless—a perfect but petticoated paradise, where big and beautiful women ruled and little and learned men obeyed in a marvelous communistic government; where love had been suppressed for ages and kinship was unknown; and where the most stupendous and elaborate buildings were constructed without the use of metal tools; and how, by reason of his superior proportions as a man, and the novelties which he introduced in the way of ideas, microbes, seeds and the like, he at first willy-nilly and afterward, in despite of all his efforts to the contrary, disorganized the perfect commonwtalth, destroyed the pure and happy people and annihilated the lovely land, with all its natural and artificial wonders.

The narrative runs along on all fours from incident and adventure, of a novel, curious and exciting character, to events of vast involvings, amazing, appalling and gruesome in the extreme; halting betimes for a minute or two for meat and drink in a descriptive paragraph or philosophic reflection; but, generally speaking, taking a bite out of the surroundings and lapping up the circumstances without stopping as the dog of the proverb-monger was said to drink the waters of the Nile; and while the course for several chapters is amid a flowery field of rank luxuriance, where the stamens and pistils are visible to

the eye as well as the petals, it is believed that it never crosses the line of propriety consistent with the subject. To the old maid, however, who uprooted all the flowers in her garden as the vilest of weeds when she learned that the stamens were males, the pistils females, the painted and perfumed corollas bridal chambers, and the bees flitting from flower to flower as veritable go-betweens for a hire of honey as Pandorus of old—to her and such like prudes, the book should remain closed.

Otherwise, and in a word, I may say this book has been written exclusively for the good and pure old man, to whom the world, the flesh and the devil are no longer foul and forbidden facts in himself and his surroundings, but fair and fascinating fancies in the glamour of the evening of life—or, haply, flashing and scintillating in the lightening before death.

TO JAMES M. SWANK, ESQ.,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

REVI-LONA

CHAPTER I.

At 8 o'clock in the evening of Friday, the twenty-fifth day of June, 1880, I was the happpiest man of two and twenty in West Newton, or, for anything I know to the contrary, in the little world of Southwestern Pennsylvania, or the big about it; for on the following Sunday—just forty-eight hours distant—I was to wed a woman whom I lived very dearly, Clara Burleigh, the only child of a wealthy and worthy old banker of the town.

The expressman had brought me my wedding suit from the most fashionable tailor of Pittsburgh, and while I was trying it on and receiving the congratulations and compliments of my sisters on the excellence of the fit and the fitness of the apparel to the man, and the like, with divers interjectional queries as to the quality of the cloth, and the number of yards required to make a suit for the biggest man in the county, and whether or not a big man got his garments at the expense of the little, at so much a suit, or in accordance with his size—while, in fine, the little tocsin of time on the mantel was telling the fateful hour, I was handed a note from my betrothed, and learned from it that I was jilted—coldly and irrevocably jilted; and that, too, without cause assigned; leaving me to conjecture wildly and in vain, in a chaos of anger, mortification, and resentment.

The Sunday following—the day set for my marriage—my betrothed disappeared; and I was arrested and imprisoned in the lock-up of the town under suspicion of having murdered her and secreted her body; the circumstances warranting this being the fact that I had been seen the past night prowling beneath her window in a compromising mood and manner, to say the least of it; and that I appeared in the morning confused and excited, with my clothing disordered, and with several drops of fresh blood on my cuffs and collar and handkerchief—this, however, in fact, from a trifling scratch on the back of my left hand which had bled freely, but which I had not regarded in my frenzy.

The next day my betrothed reappeared the wife of a handsome, well-dressed, and pretentious man, Percy Reynolds, whom I knew to be a gambler and believed to be an all-round crook—she having eloped with him and having been married to him in Cumberland, the Gretna Green of the neighboring State of Maryland.

I at once was released from the lock-up by the magistrate who had committed me, with a jocular apology and congratulation combined; while my blood was boiling at the indignity to which I had been subjected.

Two days afterward, my successful rival, in the company of two notorious burglars, was caught in the act of cracking the safe of his father-in-law; and in the struggle which ensued, he was ruptured severely and overpowered, while the good old man, the father of my beloved, was shot in the side and mortally wounded—dying, in fact, three hours after receiving the bullet of the scoundrel's revolver.

The ruptured murderer, suffering too much to be sent to the county jail, was confined in the lock-up from which I had been liberated; and late in the afternoon of Thursday, a lynching-bee was organized, and I was appointed the captain of the secret company. But, for reasons which I felt keenly and deeply, but which I could not formulate in words in my distress and excitement at the time, I declined to be a member of the company at all and denounced the intended act of vengeance as the most heinous of crimes; and happily for me, in the midst of my accumulating misery, I was knocked down by a blow from behid and carried home on a stretcher insensible; and I lay on my bed under the eyes of a nurse and a surgeon, while I was believed by the people in general to be the ringleader of the masked rioters who had fired the lock-up and were riddling with their revolver bullets the roasting body of my successful rival.

Then came unlucky Friday again, and with it the crown of my misery. The dear, deluded woman, in the web of whose being the threads of my life were entangled if not woven inextricably, disappeared again—however, leaving a trace of her whereabouts behind her this time in a note addressed to me:

"My Dear Anson:—I have wronged you; and, in doing so I have wronged the world. There is no forgiveness for me. I do not ask it—I am unworthy of it. And the last moments of my existence are a continuous prayer that you will not share the ruin which I have wrought. Farewell—forever.

CLARA."

At my suggestion the deep pool of the Youghiogheny, called Budd's Hole, below the point where our love had been plighted a thousand times in words and kisses, was dragged; and the body of the ill-fated woman was found, weighted with two heavy railway coupling-links, suspended at her waist, and adorned with the necklace and bracelets which I had presented her to grace her lovely form as my bride.

Then, on Sunday afternoon, supported by two sturdy friends, and with my head in bandages, I followed the corpse to the graveyard; and as the clods fell on the resounding coffin, I felt that my existence, or all that gave life a motive for living, was buried in the grave of my beloved; and the happiest man of only nine short days ago was the most wretched.

CHAPTER II.

Betimes, during the paroxysms of pain caused by the ugly contusion of my scalp, I would awake from the stupefying shock which I had sustained in the succession of events which collectively formed an overwhelming catastrophe, and swear vengeance on the cowardly ruffian who had struck me unawares and without provocation; and as well, the rioters who had aided and abetted the ruffian and who afterwards became a lawless gang of murderers in lynching the defenceless Reynolds; and as well the hot-headed men and women who had been instrumental in causing my imprisonment on the merest suspicion. I knew them all; and I knew they dreaded my recovery as the summons of fate to meet their well-deserved punishment which the journals of the day were setting before their eyes constantly in the most glaring of type and cut, in countless denunciations in general and a myriad of special appeals to the coroner and the grand jury of the county to uphold the sanctity of the law and vindicate the honor of the State.

As my wound healed, however, I conceived a loathing for the place of my birth and the scene of so many of my joys and sorrows from that time to the death of Clara, and a longing to go away—anywhere from the surroundings which had become so horrible to me, and as soon and as far as possible.

This was joyful news to those who were quaking with dread; and before a fortnight had elapsed, and while the coroner was sitting on the charred remains of Reynolds, from day to day vainly striving to implicate any particular person in the commission of the great crime, I was visited by a committee of the guilty who proposed to me a trip to Atlantic City, ostensibly for the sake of my health, but in reality to negotiate with me beyond the jurisdiction of the courts of Pennsylvania with respect to my removal from the United States for a period of two years at least, and my withholding the names of the rioters who had lynched Reynolds, and who if known would be indicted for the murder at the next session of the court of oyer and terminer, the coming August.

I went to Atlantic City; and to avoid suspicion, I went with two of my friends who were not involved in the crime and who were ignorant of the secret motive of my trip.

I recovered rapidly, with the change of air and scene, and association; and when my friends returned to their several duties, leaving me behind them in the belief that I would follow in a few weeks perfectly restored to my former health and vigor, barring the grief of the wounds within from which I, perhaps, would never recover, I notified the committee of the conspirators in the way we had agreed on.

They came at once; and, to make a long story short, in ten days after their arrival, I paid all my bills with their money and secretly went away from Atlantic City to New York, where, under the assumed name of Alexander Newton, I took passage on the steamer Alliance for Rio de Janeiro, with my passage paid to that port and with fifteen

hundred dollars in gold in my pocket to see me comfortably on my way farther to my destination, Callao, Peru—or, to be more exact, the mountain station of Chicla on the Oroya or trans-Andean railroad (El Ferro Caril del Callao, Lima y Oroya,) where an appointment as telegrapher and train-dispteher at a salary of $1,200 a year, had been secured for me from the New York capitalists who control the road.

In a great measure I dictated this appointment; for, from the fourteenth year of my age to my seventeenth, (when I left the road to enter college and prepare for and eventually to read medicine and take my degree as a Doctor of Medicine in the Georgetown Medical College, at Washington,) I had been in the service of the Pennsylvania Railroad as a telegrapher and was competent to fill the position satisfactorily to my employers and myself; while, in a strange country, I might not be able to make a living in my untried profession.

CHAPTER III.

Thanks to the monopolizing misery of mal-de-mer, the pang of the past was annihilated in that of the present; and by the time I got the use of my sea-legs and sea-stomach, I was the new-born babe of a new man in a new world. I stared in silence at everything within the range of my vision in the ship, the surrounding horizon-bound sea, and the overarching sky. And this period of infancy having passed in a few days, I began to play at skittles and quoits with my fellow-passengers; then checkers, euchre, and seven-up. And this period of childhood having passed in due time, I began to indulge in the more becoming sports and games of a lusty youth and vigorous manhood—racing and jumping, and especially boxing and wrestling, in which (thanks to an inherited skill from my former existence, which I had acquired among my railroad friends and college playmates,) after a number of bouts with the strongest of the passengers, and several sailors, including the big overbearing second mate, I became, by right of conquest, the athletic king of the ship. At the time of my coronation, standing six feet five in my stockings, weighing two hundred and eighty-six pounds, and having a chest-girth of forty-nine inches, physically a notable man among men; and I was vain enough betimes in the elation of victory to consider myself a man of consequence in keeping with my proportions.

Otherwise the voyage was uneventful—from New York to Rio de Janeiro in an American vessel; from the capital of Brazil to Montevideo in a Brazilian; and from the capital of Uruguay, through the Strait of Magellan and Smythe's Channel, to Lota, a small harbor in the southern part of Chili in a British ship.

Here, in the last mentioned port, while the steamer was receiving a supply of coal, I went ashore with a number of my sailor subjects to see the sights of the place, which, among sailors, generally or substantially means the wine and women of the country.

Led by an old frequenter of the saloons of the divided city, we went directly to his favorite in Lower Leota; and one drink following another in rapid succession until we were all half drunk, or otherwise fractionally intoxicated, and proportionally noisy, boisterous, and reckless. I danced the **zamacueca** with one stoutly built young women after another until I could not keep on my legs any longer and sank

into a chair. At this juncture one of the sailors, Tarry Wilson by name, whom I had thrown with difficulty in a wrestling match in the forecastle, bantered me to a trial of strength and skill again, then and there, for the very considerable wager of twenty pounds, or one hundred dollars of American money.

I was the victor of a hundred pitched battles; I could not refuse; and drunk as I knew myself to be, I accepted the challenge.

In a few minutes, the three rounds were over; and in a maudlin mortification of crying, profanity and inane cheering, I acknowledged my defeat and set about to pay the wager I had lost. To do this, it was necessary to expose the belt about my body which contained my store of gold at the time—between twelve and thirteen hundred dollars. Whereupon, I was toasted and drank to, in the most jubilant and turbulent manner, by the women as well as the men, in Valdivian beer, in **chicha** common, and **chicha de Aconcagua**, and **chicha de Atacama**, until I sank to the floor insensible—dead drunk, if ever a man was and still retained in him somehow the breath of life.

CHAPTER IV.

I awoke to consciousness in broad daylight, surrounded by a number of boisterous and inquisitive English-speaking seamen, more or less under the influence of liquor, who were plying me with as many series of questions as there were individuals in the party and altogether —calling me variously "swelled-head," "katzenjammer," "shipmate" "somebody's darling," "beauty," and the like; while one of them held to my lips a bottle of brandy and urged me, with word and gesture and grimace curiously combined, to take a hair of the dog that had bitten me and get on my legs again and come along with them

At length, in answere to my first enquiry: "Where am I?" I learned that I was sitting on a bench in Madame Cousinos Park, in the little City of Leota, in the country of Chili, in the continent of South America, in the Southern Hemisphere of the planet Earth, with the rays of the Sun of Austerlitz and other glorious memories shining full in my eyes and dazzling my vision and understanding somewhat at the time. Moreover, that I was without hat and shoes and stockings, and protruding and bulging out vagariously from a ragged pair of knee-breeches below and a tattered shirt above, with a faded American flag bound around my waist between—a monstrously fantastic scare-crow!

Then, in reply to their enquiries, "Who are you"" and "How did you get here?" as I began to realize chaotically what had befallen me, I told them of my coming ashore with a number of sailors of the British ship on which I was a passenger on my way to Callao, Peru; of my drinking, dancing, and wrestling; of my losing my stake and counting out my money from the store in my belt, and then of drinking again and again until I knew no more.

By this time, my mental faculties returning with increasing distinctness the longer I talked, I appreciated approximately as well as my listeners that I was a victim of a conspiracy among my quondam sailor friends and robbed, not only of all my money, but also of every stitch of clothing I had on at the time; and I began to shudder as a half-formed thought obtruded itself now and then in the maze of my

meditations, and turn on the bench and lookly wildly at the shipping in the harbor.

My action spoke perhaps even more plainly than my words; for with one voice, the sailors cried out, "Gone!" and a moment after, as a feeling of faintness came over me, I made out from the babel of remarks around me, that the vessel had steamed away at dawn of the day before—some twenty-six or twenty-seven hours in the past.

Again I took a hair of the dog that bad bitten me; and as I reviewed, amid an overwhelming confusion of commiseration for my bad fortune in falling among British thieves, and congratulation on my good fortune in alighting among American true men, they asked me whether or not I was a prize-fighter by profession.

"No," I replied, with a feeble attempt at smiling.

"Nor a muscular preacher on a vacation for his health?"

No."

"Nor a temperance lecturer getting experience for his future work?"

No."

"Nor a Sunday school superintendent with the missionary fund in your belt?"

No."

"Nor a bank cashier, reported drowned at home, but living like a lord under an alien name and sky?"

"Nothing of the kind, gentlemen. I am a doctor."

This announcement was greeted by a general cheer of joy and satisfaction, followed by a volley of exclamatory statements, which may be summarized as follows:

"We are all to be congratulated! You, of all men, are just the man we are in want of. Our search is at an end, and your fortune is made. Come along with us. These rags shall be supplanted with purple and fine linen; and your lost treasure shall be restored an hundredfold. A doctor—a doctor! Say rather an angel fallen from the clouds to meet an unlooked for emergency. Here, my good fellow, put on this coat, and straighten yourself between these sturdy men, who are your slaves from this instant. There, steady Now, taking a parting drink to your past whatsoever it has been—it is gone and forever, and now, a welcoming drop to your future, as full of happiness and honor and golden reward as any man of your inches and years on the periphery of the planet today. Come along!"

I cannot put their several speeches into sailor lingo. I will not attempt nor will I endeavor here to express the sympathy which they as Americans felt for me, an American in the most wretched plight imaginable, but which was more effective in inducing me to accompany them than the rewards of divers kinds that would follow my services to them as a doctor.

I learned afterward that "doctor" in sea parlance was the equivalent of "cook," and the sailors who had impressed me in the bewilderment of an awakening from a drunken debauch, a naked wretch on a foreign shore, were a gang of American whalers who were returning to their ship after an unsuccessful search for a competent cook in the town.

I learned afterward also that before we reached the shore I became such a burden to my captors that I was put into a cart and dragged by a mule to the landing; there, that I was transferred to the bottom

of a small boat by the united efforts of the gang, with the aid of a skid; and finally that I was taken aboard the whaling vessel, like a great inanimate object, with rope and tackle.

CHAPTER V.

For five days (as I learned afterward) I was confined in the stern of the vessel in a little room which had been cut off from the captain's cabin for the accommodation of an only daughter, who, after the death of her mother, had accompanied her father on his several voyages until she died, like her mother before her, of consumption, during the past twelvemonth; and during this time I was practically a prisoner, seeing nobody but a sailor attendant who without a word brought my meals to me and escorted me while I paced the deck twice a day for the benefit of my health. I was dressed in a suit of fairly well-fitting clothes, with a penknife and a silver dollar in one pocket, a briarwood pipe and a packet of tobacco in another, and a good cambric handkerchief in a third; and I was treated with so much consideration by my attendant and the sailors whom I encountered in my walks, but in absolute silence, that I accepted the situation as gracefully and pleasantly as I could under the unlooked for very comfortable circumstances.

At length, on the morning of the sixth day, I was ushered into the presence of the captain of the ship in his cabin adjoining mine; and I saw for the first time the mysterious man, who, on the high seas somewhere in the southern hemisphere, had me as completely in his power for life or death as if I were a sparrow in the grasp of his hand.

He was a middle-sized muscular man, with the mildest countenance and gentlest manner I have ever seen in a man in command or authority. In a word, he seemed to be a happy combination of oil and iron, or silk and steel; and he was in fact as he appeared to be.

After bidding me in the kindliest tone imaginable, be seated, he took a chair in front of me and said:

"You are, I believe, from certain papers in my possession, Alexander Newton, of New York City, a telegrapher, on your way to Peru to accept a position on the Aroyo railroad?"

"I am," I replied, greatly surprised and pleased at the import of his words to me. "Or, rather, I was," I added with a smile, "for whether I am now on my way to Peru or Timbuctoo or Kingdom Come, I know only that I am in good company."

"In behalf of whom, one and all, I, William Henry Harrison Montgomery, master of this whaling vessel, formerly the **Aixe,** of Boston, Massachusetts, but now, since her purchase by Madame Cousino, the **Southern Cross,** of Valparaiso, Chili. I thank you for the compliment, and beg you will let me proceed to the goal of my discourse without any further interruption, although it be to pick up a nosegay cast in my course."

I bowed in silence in the expression of my acquiescence

"Mr. Newton, the manner in which you were brought aboard this vessel was very painful to me; and before apologizing to you for the act of a number of the crew, I have endeavered to make the amend that lay in my power, for the outrage. I investigated the misfortune which befell you in Leota, before I left the harbor; and I was fortu-

nate enough to secure a letter of introduction which had been in your possession before it was picked up on the street, and which, presumably, revealed your identity. I sympathize with you as an outrageously wronged man and especially as a countryman in the direst distress in a foreign country, with almost half the circumference of the globe between him and his home and friends. And after a night's consideration as to the best thing to be done under the circumstances, I concluded to procure for you a comfortable outfit, and take you along with me on the present voyage (which I could not delay any longer in justice to my employer), either at my own expence as an honored guest or at your own, as one of the crew in whatever capacity you may select in keeping with the management of the ship—everything, from truck to keelson, being taken into consideration for the success of the expedition. I have done and await your reply at your pleasure."

"Accept it then at present," I replied, my voice husky with emotion and my eyes filling with tears. "In addition to being a telegrapher I am a graduate of the Georgetown Medical College, and a phycician and surgeon by name at least, for I have never practiced the profession of medicine; and I have a confused but substantially certain recollection that I was shipped as such by the members of your crew, who found me in my wretched plight; and if consistent with the welfare of the vessel and agreeable to her most considerate and compassionate captain, I desire to serve in that capacity to the end of the voyage, and sincerely hope——"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Newton, for the interruption, "but my dear doctor—yes, I see—I see—how ineffably ludicrous! You shipped as a doctor, did you?"

"I did, to the best of my knowledge and belief."

"But a 'doctor' in the language of the seamen who accepted you means a 'cook!'"

"Then the ship's cook let me be—or the ship's scullion, for however menial the service, to the best of my ability, I will perform it cheerfully in the expression of my appreciation of the noble manner in which you have treated me."

"I treated you as a fellow man, as my instincts, and as my conception of my duty, impelled me; and I am happy to find that you have responded to my treatment in a way that pleases me and satisfies me for what I have done, and encourages me to do more in the future. I accept you as the Doctor of this vessel in a double capacity, a physician and surgeon as you consented to come aboard, and as a cook, as the sailors welcomed you to fill a vacancy in our crew, and relieve one of our best harpooners now on duty in the galley As the first, you will occupy the room adjoining mine, which you have done since you came aboard, and take charge of the medicine chest in the under drawer beneath your bunk; and as the second, at eight bells this morning you will go into the galley and put yourself under the instruction of the temparary incumbent there, who, I doubt not, in a few days will make you as proficient in the art and mystery of the ship's coppers as he is himself, so that his services in that department may be dispensed with."

Whereupon, with few words and little ceremony I subscribed to the ship's articles as a "doctor," as the captain suggested, and at the time indicated, I went on duty in the galley.

CHAPTER VI.

The seal of silence was broken now; and in the good fellowship which prevailed among the officers and crew, consistent with the strictest discipline (as far as my limited knowledge of nautical matters went), I soon in turn engaged in conversation with everybody aboard, and got as many accounts of my spree at Leota and its involvings and consequences as there were individuals—all being different organizations and all interpreting their environment differently as they responded to it variously. From all accounts, however, I was satisfied the Captain had done the best for me under the circumstances, and most humanely and decisively, in a manner characteristic of the man—the best specimen of manhood, taking him all in all, I had ever met.

I entered my new school with an interest amounting to enthusiasm and a determination to do better than the most sanguine of the crew expected; and in a few days, by the order of the captain and the approval of the crew, I became the only "doctor" on the ship (and scullion and physician and surgeon combined), and as thorough a master as Apicius himself of such compounds and concoctions as lobscouse, dumb-funk, duff, cracker-hash, choke-dog, menavelins, dough-boys, and dough-Jehovahs! Happily, there was no danger of dyspepsia among the hardy whalers; otherwise I might have been a much longer time in acquiring the art of making old horse, spuds, and boiled dough acceptable to their stomachs. And the dishes washed and the coppers scoured, I had leisure to be the physician and surgeon of the ship and enjoy the privileges of my vaguely determined position, chatting familiarly with the captain, reading one or other of the many books (which had been the solace of the captain's wife and daughter in bygone years) which were stored in my cabin, boxing and wrestling with the sailors, and betimes musing alone in incipient melancholy in my cabin, with perhaps the name of the captain's daughter before me on the fly-leaf of an open volume, in a handwriting strangely simulating that of my loved and lost Clara; or the key in my hand which unlocked all the drawers beneath my bunk, not only the one containing the medicine chest of the ship, but also two others filled with the apparel, jewels and other personal belongings of the former occupant of the little room—a key which, opening for me the world in which woman exists and makes of man something other than a beast or a machine, had an indescribable fascination for me.

I had little thought of where the vessel was going or interest in the end of the voyage as a commercial enterprise; but from what was going on around me all the time and said in many voices and tones, I learned that we were cruising in remarkably open water in very high southern latitudes, and that we were as yet strangely unsuccessful in the sight of a true, right, or Greenland whale.

At length, late in the evening of which was not far from the midsummer midnight in the high latitude in which we were sailing in

fact, for several days past along a ragged wall of ice, which the sailors said formed a variable fringe around the antarctic continent—the sea assumed a reddish appearance for several miles around the ship, and the word "brit" passed rapidly from the man on the lookout aloft to the captain in his cabin; and in a few minutes everybody was in a state of excitement, including myself, by the contagion of action among men—not knowing at the time that "brit" was the sailor's term for the little shellfish on which the right whale feeds, and which reasonably might be regarded in good whaling ground as a favorable sign of the presence of one or more of the mighty mammals of the deep.

Suddenly, while all were straining their eyes through the dusky reddish gloaming without discerning anything larger than the minute molluscs which were visible only collectively in an infinite multitude, the vessel stopped in her forward course and shivered from stem to stern as if she had struck a sunken rock and then after righting herself, seemingly like a thing of life and consciousness, she moved on as before.

The vessel had struck a whale in rising to the surface to breathe, and about the time all the experienced sailors had come to this conclusion a number of whales appeared coming toward us from as many different directions out of the amethyst gloom a number so surprisingly large as to alarm me somewhat and to move the captain to declare with an unusual emphasis that it was the largest school he ever had seen. By some means of submarine telegraphy, known only to the whales, the stricken monster had communicated to its fellows for many miles around the fact that their dominion had been invaded by a mysterious stranger of even greater bulk than their own, and summoned them to the spot to investigate the matter for themselves.

At any rate, whatever the cause of the concentration of the whales, they stayed about the ship throughout the short night, blowing within our hearing, and frequently gamboling so close to the vessel as to be seen with astonishing distinctness in the starlight—a weird and wonderful exhibition that repaid me fully for all I had suffered in Leota, I enthusiastically declared.

At the first moment practicable in the dawn, all the boats (four in number) were manned (with six men in each, a boat-header, a harpooner, and four oarsmen—Captain Montgomery going as a harpooner in one of the starboard boats) and the chase began—two of the boats keeping off our port bow and two off our starboard in pursuit severally of the two divisions into which the school was found to be divided; while the sky being clear, the sea smooth and the wind barely sufficient to fill the sails, the vessel was left in charge of five men, Thomas Burroughs, the third mate, in command; Benjy Wallace, a trusty old barnacle at the wheel; Billy Watson, the steward and cabin boy combined, Davy Milton, alias Nimble Jack, an experienced sailor, but so excitable as to be unfitted for service in the boats, and myself—the first four to attend the ship and the fifth to get a royal repast in readiness for the ravenous hunters on their return from the arduous and hazardous chase and assist the sailors when required.

On went the whales farther and farther from the ship; and on went their pursuers to the right and left until they could not be seen from the deck.

Whereupon Burroughs, the third mate, went aloft and somehow losing his hold, he fell and not only dashed out his brains against a

corner of the tryworks on the deck, but also broke the neck of Watson, the steward, who, throwing his head back to see what was making the racket above him, received a blow in the face from the falling man's leg.

I was paralyzed by the sight of this awful accident; and I stood staring at the bodies lying on the deck until Nimble Jack, in a frenzy of excitement, coming and going in the circle of my vision aroused me to action.

I went to the bodies, and a moment I ascertained that they were lifeless. Then somehow I staggered to Benjy Wallace at the wheel, and reported the fact to him, ignoring Nimble Jack, whom I unconsciously realized was demented for the time being, wringing his hands and uttering a peculiar barking cry while he ran to and fro without purpose.

Benjy saw the accident as well as myself, but he never left his post; and when I informed him of the fatal result to both the mate and the steward, he coolly said: "Accidents will happen in the best regulated ships as well as families; and I have seen the like of this once before. Now get the captain's glass and crawl up in the rigging and let me know where the boats are and what they are doing. Be quick about it, but make sure of your hold; for you see you and I alone must take charge of the ship."

I did as I was ordered and as soon as I caught sight of the boats in pursuit of the whales, I became interested and excited in the chase and forgot all about the accident. I bawled out the particulars to Benjy below using baseball and football slang in preference to nautical terms; and if they had no effect on the cool and collected man at the wheel they certainly had on the half-crazed Nimble Jack. For, glancing down, I observed that he stopped betimes in his senseless wandering to listen to me, and finally he ascended the rigging to the highest lookout of the ship, some twenty or thirty feet above my station.

As he passed me I saw the first harpoon cast—I think by the captain himself.

I saw the action, however, as much, perhaps, in fancy as in fact, for the actors were so far away and at the same time I was confused somewhat by Nimble Jack above me calling out to the man at the wheel "Fog bank rising astern!"

At this juncture the gentle wind ceased to blow, and the sails hung loose from the yards. Nimble Jack descended hurriedly to the deck, ordering me as he passed me to remain in the rigging and keep the boats in sight.

On reaching the deck he had a brief but excited conference with the man at the wheel. Then he rushed forward to the little brass cannon in th bow and fired it several times as fast as he could swab out and load.

In the meantime a succession of little gusts filled the sails to such an extent that the ship could be steered and driven in the direction of either of the absent parties, or kept in her course as she had been about midway between them.

Nimble Jack, in increasing excitement as the fog bank rose higher and higher to windward, ordered Benjy to steer toward one or other party and make sure of picking up one.

Benjy replied that in the absence of all the officers he was the senior sailor aboard and decided for himself; and that as the boats were equally distant he would treat them alike.

Nimble Jack responded that in the absence of all the officers and

Benjy at the wheel, he was the only sailor on the quarterdeck, and must be obeyed.

To this Benjy muttered that he had too many barnacles on his back to be taught his duty by a swab.

And so the wordy war went on, but without attracting more than a casual notice from me; for I was occupied intensely in watching the boats and rejoiced to see that their occupants had heard the warning cannon shots and were heading toward the vessel with all speed.

On they came fast, but the fog came faster; and as the dense cloud enveloped the ship and hid them from view, Nimble Jack proceeded to fire the cannon again, when he found to his horror that in his excitement he had rammed home a wad before he had put in the charge of powder, and rendered the gun useless. Despair seized him at once, and wringing his hands and crying about as before, he ran backward and forward in a tempest of excitement and bewilderment.

"Get the captain's fowling-piece and blaze away with that," cried out the sturdy man at the wheel.

But Nimble Jack had his senses about him only to refuse with an oath to obey the orders of Benjy.

Whereupon I slipped down to the captain's cabin, and having secured his gun and a supply of cartridges, I resumed my place in the rigging and at intervals of five or ten minutes fired right and left into the fog.

In the meantime the wind that came with the fog was somewhat stronger than the gentle breeze and the fitful gusts which had preceded it, and the vessel was moving faster than any of us perhaps suspected.

At any rate, one dreary hour followed another, and one supply of cartridges followed another, till just as the sun was setting the fog rose and revealed a speckless sea as far as the eye could reach from the masthead, even when aided by the captain's glass.

When I announced this fact Nimble Jack, in a delirium of despair, rushed upon Benjy and stabbed him with great force in the breast.

The blow was directed at Benjy's heart; but the man at the wheel falling back as the murderer rushed upon him, the point of the big knife missed the heart and cut open the pericardium and penetrated the lung tissue below and behind. The wound was fatal, but before Benjy fell, he had the grim satisfaction of seeing his cowardly assassin lying dead at his feet. For as Nimble Jack turned from his staggering victim in the belief that the conflict was over, the stricken sailor whipped out his marlin spike and drove the point of it into the base of Nimble Jack's brain, killing him instantly.

I saw the double deed of murder and vengeance from my perch aloft and I shuddered and grew faint alternately as I descended to the deck.

There, dropping the captain's gun, I ran to the wheel to which Benjy was clinging, to take him in my arms and lay him gently on the deck; but he fell heavily before I could get to him, and died without a sigh or groan an instant afterward.

CHAPTER VII.

The four men whose bodies lay on the deck had excellent qualities in life, especially Nimble Jack and Benjy. The former was the more intellectual, but excitable and erratic in the extreme, and the latter the most trustworthy, but sullen and obstinate; and both were genial friends to me; and much as I deplored the tragic encounter which resulted in the death of both, their destruction and their bloody corpses before me, as well as the ghastly bodies of the mate and the steward, were but a part of a stupendous whole which in all probability included the annihilation of the entire crew. This, as I fancied one after another of starvation and exposure, the sailors in the four open boats searching in vain for the good ship long since under the horizon, and myself, the last to succumb to the inevitable, lingering from day to day, alone in the mighty belt of waters that girdles the austral polar continent—an end so awful to me in contemplation that only the suicide of Clara and the revulsion of my whole sentient being against self-slaughter, prevented me from cutting short the period of my existence with its accumulating misery, by casting myself into the sea.

I paced the deck with a rapid stride in a perfect gale of emotion accompanied by the most horrible imaginings, flashing like lightning in the storm-rack of my wildly excited mind. Until at length, exhausted by the wear and tear of the human machine in excessive mental and emotional action—if not, indeed, worn out from loss of sleep and want of food—I descended to my cabin and lay down on my bunk in an apathetic stupor which, in a few minutes, became a prolonged and dreamless sleep.

How long I slept I do not know, but twelve hours at least I believe, for when I awoke I felt only the pangs of hunger and thought only of going to the galley and eating interminably of the most palatable viands among the food supplies of the ship.

And before many minutes had elapsed I had regaled myself to saiety, and felt encouraged to meet whatever fate was in store for me in the future as bravely and as cheerfully as flesh and blood and a dogged determination would permit.

With this resolution, I went on deck, and with the interest and somewhat of the enthusiasm of a young surgeon, I examined the wounds of the four dead men and determined to my satisfaction the cause of their death. Then, having thrown the bodies overboard and swabbed the deck, I took in all the sail my little experience as a sailor would allow, and set about to make myself as comfortable as possible in the occupancy of the ship. I went into every nook and cranny of the vessel and took a mental inventory of its contents; but I found no place more agreeable to me than my own cabin, with the books of Julia Montgomery the captain's daughter, in racks along the walls, and the medicine chest and the clothing and jewels of the dead woman in the drawers beneath my bunk; while I found the captain's cabin not without a special attraction in a store of good liquors of which heretofore I had no knowledge or suspicion.

I sampled several of the bottles sparingly and cautiously—to make their acquaintance simply; and heroically I refrained from getting drunk when I had every temptation in the world before me. Indeed, I was rejoiced to such a degree over my going away from the delicious liquors sober, that I exultingly cried out, "This is the red-letter day of my existence; for, with all the circumstances against me, I have overcome the demon of drunkenness!" and I concluded that there was some virtue in a good resolution after all!

By and by, as I looked out casually over the ocean, as a momentary relief from reading one of Julia's books, or rummaging among the exceedingly interesting miscellany of the sailors' effects, letters, songbooks, photographs, trinkets "scrimshones," and the like, I was startled to find that the vessel was carried by a strong current into a canon-like opening in the great ragged wall of circumpolar ice with which I had become quite familiar at a distance, looming up above the horizon in an endless variety of fantastic shapes and exquisite hues and interblendings. The air at the same time rapidly passed from comfortably cool to freezing, obliging me to put on the warmest flannels I could find in the ship and the heaviest clothing generally.

At length, the vessel having entered the canon, it was borne rapidly by the current through the narrow channel in the ice, while the cold became so intense on deck as to be unbearable.

The end is coming very soon, I said to myself as I entered the galley, closed the door behind me and began to stir the fire in the stove. With the first movement of the ice the walls of the channel will come together like a pair of mighty jaws, and the ship and its contents will be as a sparrow's egg between them.

Then I began to think of the cause of the channel; and I came to the conclusion that the ocean current which passed through it must be warm enough to have made it and keep it open. If so, the hold of the ship below the water line would always be above the freezing point, and until the vessel should be broken or thrown out of the warm current I should be in no great danger of freezing to death. Encouraged by the thought I went into the hold and found it comparatively warm; then I went on the icy deck and drew up a bucket of sea water, and found it, relatively speaking, to the ice around me, hot!

I was almost delirious with joy; for at once I inferred from the strength of the current that it must pass through the ice belt at least, and perhaps traverse the whole polar region, and thence complete a circuit in the tropic regions of the earth; and I conceived the hopeful idea that if I should have the patience and pluck to endure the trials and privations of a passage through the unknown austral regions of the earth, in the hold of the vessel below the water line, I would be carried in the course of several months into the temperate and tropic waters of the world and rescued haply by a passing ship having curiosity aboard sufficient to investigate a drifting derelict. Accordingly, I carried a bountiful supply of food and clothing into the hold, filled up a comfortable bed, and began to hybernate, as I facetiously termed my subaqueous retirement, in the cheerful and hopeful state I was in. But after a confinement of nearly four weeks, as well as I could reckon time, the air in the hold became so foul as to be unbearable; and, after a narrow escape from asphyxiation by letting my head fall a little lower than usual into a stratum of carbonic acid gas, I returned to the galley; and while I felt rather warm than cold, I rekindled the fire in the stove

and sat down, congratulating myself as I became revivified by the inhalation of fresh air, that if I must die in Antarctica, it should be not like a dog in the Grotto del Cane, but infinitely rather like a Siberian mammoth encased in ice, with all my tissuees intact, and perhaps in a future age a paleontologic specimen of inestimable value to a wondering scientific world.

At length, the fire went out in the stove; for I was uncomfortably warm beside it, and too drowsy to stir or give it more than a passing thought that I could get along without it—and fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I awoke I found myself in a profuse perspiration, and after rubbing my eyes and gathering my wandering wits together, like so many half-frozen sheep in a fog, I realized where I was and what had happened—that during my hybernation in the hold and my stewing and steaming in sleep in the galley, the vessel had been borne by the mysterious current beyond the regions of ice and into a genial clime.

I went on deck, and after my eyes had become accustomed to the dazzling light of the sun, I discerned afar off, on the one side of the ship, the long, familiar wall of ice and anear on the other side, a barren mountainous shore, with great clouds of steam rising at several points —evidently, from a number of smouldering volcanoes or a vast geyser region. I was disappointed, of course, in not seeing any sign of habitation by mankind—nor even a sign of vegation; for my suddenly awakened hope of escaping from the ship was boundless. And I came within an ace of losing all hope of ever seeing the face of a fellow man again, when I reflected that the cause of the hot current which had borne me hither might be comparatively local in its character and due entirely to an extensive area of subdued but continuous volcanic action—the current being the combined waters of innumerable geysers, making a circuit, not like some of the great oceanic currents from the polar to the equatorial regions, but around a great volcanic island or subdivision of the little-known continent of Antarctica.

Soon, however, I recovered from this approach of despair, and repeating to myself again and again, "While there is life there is hope," I set about cleansing the ship—opening the hatches and bullseyes and letting the fresh air (and rather sulphurous, as I fancied) into the hold, the forecastle, the cabin, the drawers and the chests of the sailors —in fine, into every recess and compartment, big and little, that might contain and retain any of the poisonous gases which had been generated during the period of my hybernation, and of which I had a greater dread than my polar surroundings. Then, having washed myself thoroughly, trimmed my hair shaved, put on clean linen and well-brushed outer garments, I went aloft to explore the new-found land with the aid of the captain's glass.

Presently, afar in the distance, in inexpressible delight-indeed, I may say in truth, in irrepressible delight, for I could hear and feel my heart thumping in my chest—I discerned a series of shapes so regular in their outlines that I was satisfied instantly that they were not natural but artificial; and infinitely more, that they were an indubitable proof of an advanced civilization at hand.

Among these shapes the most conspicuous was a stupendous arch of a white material, somewhat like ice, but yet very different from any of the many hues and tints of ice with which I had become familiar. This spanned a great chasm between two opposing mountainous headlands, which formed a natural passage from the seat to an evident valley beyond the majestic arch. I say evident valley, for the second of the shapes the the most remarkable in the amazing cluster, was a systematic tower, with a winding line, suggesting a spiral pathway around it, from base to summit—this rising beyond the arch and appearing hence partly beneath and partly above the crown, and seemingly composed of the same material as the arch.

The third of the most noticeable shapes was apparently a city built in the form of a crescent, between the abutments of the arch and the bases of the mountains and the harbor; the houses being of the same white material as the arch and tower, as was also the paving of the wide thoroughfares of which there were several on each side of a wider central avenue, and all converging from the arc of the shore line to the passage under the colossal arch.

While the fourth of the prominent features of the startling panorama before me was a circular harbor mole, a league or more perhaps in circuit, with a comparatively narrow opening between two little towers like gateposts, and doubtless serving the purpose of pilots by day and lighthouses by night, with beacon fires atop. These I carefully noted, for I plainly saw from the course of the current past the mouth of the harbor that the vessel, then drifting sterm foremost, would unless directed by human agency, pass within a cable's length of the open way and drift on into the unknown, and I would lose the golden opportunity of entering the marvelous city and mingling with humanity again.

I became chilly at once, but my wits were about me, and in a few minutes I had unfurled a sail to catch the breeze that was blowing landward at the time and stood at the wheel, bringing round the ship's bow to the harbor mouth. And while the perspiration trickled from my forehead, I heaved a profound sigh of satisfaction as the vessel passed between the barbor towers, and another of the sincerest gratitude of which I was capable as the vessel gradually slackened her speed by grounding in the ooze on the bottom of the shallow harbor until she finally stopped as if imbedded in down.

I then furled the sail I had set and ran up to the masthead an American flag which I had taken from the captain's chest, and awaited in great agitation the reception I would meet from the thousands of people whom I behld thronging a myriad of small boats along the rim of the circular harbor, and running to and fro on the gentle slope leading from the water's edge to the crescentic city before me—all clad in flowing and rather voluminous garments of many colors in an under tone and most exquisitely interblending with the prevailing white, like the tints of an iceberg in the afterglow of a sunset.

CHAPTER IX.

At length from out the general confusion a man appeared alone in a neat little shallop, erect, propelling the boat with a single oar, by a mode of sculling in which he seemed to be very skilful, and in a few minutes at a signal from the sculler, the shallop ceased to move forward at a point about thirty yards in front of the bow of the vessel; whereupon I discovered that the little boat was attached to a rope astern by which in any emergency it could be drawn back to the shore.

The boatman laid down his oar and took up two little flags about the size of a lady's handkerchief, the one white and the other red; and having faced me (standing in the bow with the captain's fowling-piece loaded with buckshot, in my hand), he went through a performance with the flags which was unintelligible to me, except as a marvelous exhibition of complicated and exact movements, but which was, in fact, as I suspected from the recurrence of certain rhythmic motions which I detected, a formal message from the government of the country to which I had come—a message, which, as I afterward learned from the messenger himself, when I had mastered the intricate means of conveying intelligence in daily but diverse use among these wonderful polar people, was as follows:

"I, Kamo-raba, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, the official messenger of the Twenty-five Governing Women of Revi-lona, make these signs to you, whosoever you are, and whatsoever the object of your coming here in your big boat. See and consider. The Twenty-five governing Women hereby order and direct you to go back to the land from which you have come. Further, that you delay not in starting, after the fourth filling of the official measure (a mode of reckoning time by the dripping of water, like the clepsydra of the ancient Greeks), under penalty of death, the means to accomplish which are at hand."

At the conclusion of this signalling, the purport of which I conceived to be a protest against my landing, I bowed to the messenger, laid down the gun and extended my open arms to him; then, with other gestures, I invited him to come aboard and see for himself and be satisfied that the great country before me had nothing to fear from a single individual, in the horrible extremity in which I was. But in response he made no sign, and the shallop began to move stern foremost toward the shore. Seeing which, in a low voice, I implored the man to take me with him; but instead of heeding my words or the pleading tone in which they were uttered, he seemed horror-stricken at the sound, and dropping the flags put his hands over his ears.

A great commotion ashore followed the return of the messenger and the dissemination of his report of what he had seen and heard; and in a short time afterward I became aware of two different operations going on at the same time at opposite points of the harbor, the one on my left resulted eventually in a boat coming toward the ship, propelled by four scullers, and dragging a long, flexible, floating tube astern, which simulated an interminable serpent in its responsive move-

ments in the rippling wake of the boat. With this long inflated tube in tow, the boat went round the vessel at a distance of forty yards or thereabout. Then the ends of the tube were fastened together, and the whole made fast by weighted lines let down at intervals to the bottom of the harbor. I could not divine the object of this mysterious cordon and was in a state of great alarm in consequence.

Presently the operation on my right took a definite shape, comprising first a cluster of boats containing each a long-nozzled hose which was connected with a common hose five or six inches in diameter borne upon, second, a string of boats attached to one another so closely as to form a continuous support to the main line of hose. This strange flotilla, manned by several hundred men, moved with remarkable precision; and in due time the boat supporting the end of the main line was anchored at a point about ten yards from the inflated cordon about the ship, and the boats containing the long-nozzled small lines, to the number of twenty or more, were arranged at equal distances around the vessel and at about the same distance as the end of the main line from the floating tube.

At this juncture, when everything seemed to be in readiness to turn on the water, as I supposed from the resemblance of the apparatus to the familiar hose of the firemen of my native town, a man dressed in blue and holding in his left hand a peculiarly shaped drum like a hemispheric saucepan with a piece of leather tightly drawn over it for a lid, and in his right a baton with a big ball on the one end and a little one on the other, arose to a standing posture in the boat supporting the end of the main line of hose, and began to beat on his drum betimes with the big end of his stick and then with the little.

And again, as I had perceived a rhythmic recurrence of movements in the signaling of the first messenger, I detected a certain combination of thumpings repeated several times; and I concluded rightly the man was hammering out some message of importance to me, and long afterward, when I had acquired the mastery of the several modes of conveying intelligence which were employed in the marvelous country, I learned that the drumming meant as follows:

"I, Tobo-lulu, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, the captain (literally the thumb) of the harbor guard, beat this drum by order of the Twenty-five Governing Women of the commonwealth of Revi-lona. Hear and hearken thereto. The period of time in which you were ordered and directed to go away under penalty of death has elapsed. Your executioners are around you and await my signal to suffocate you with the poisonous fumes of the steaming liquid which comes from the awful crater (literally the belching stomach) of death, Kuma-pika, conducted hither in the great hose which is subdivided into many small before and around you. Meet your death serenely, for it is inevitable; and after death your big boat will be towed back into the ocean current, which brought you hither, and cast adrift that nothing may remain of you and it to affect us, save the remembrance of your marvelous appearance in our records till the last measure shall have been filled. I give the death blow, boomble, boomble, boomble-ll-boom! boom! boom!"

Immediately the hose began to fill at the shore, and as the fluid came nearer and nearer, I not only could see the hose swelling and straightening out into a rigid line, but also hear it hissing above the noise of the creaking, swaying boats.

This peculiar sound suggested to me that the contents of the hose might be steam or boiling water instead of cool, as I had supposed; and I realized that I might be scalded from head to foot before I could get away from my post in the bow and find shelter in the hold of the ship. The time had come for action, and I was ready for it. With the fowling-piece at my shoulder pointed steadily at the end of the main hose at the feet of the drummer, the instant I saw it begin to swell, I fired both barrels at once.

My aim was good, and as the smoke of the discharged passed from before my eyes, I saw a strong stream of a blackish fluid pouring out of a long slit in the hose, and rapidly filling the boat in which the drummer was floundering about and writhing in agony, while the whole flotilla was in a state of the wildest commotion.

At this juncture, just as the steaming liquid was overflowing the gunwales of the deeply sunken boat of the drummer, I was startled by the reverberation of the report of the gun in the chasm in the mountain wall before me, and looking up, I beheld a great flake of masonry, in shape like a ragged mainsail, fall from the side of the majestic arch that spanned the gorge; and forgetting the danger in which I was involved immediately and the consternation around me, I kept my eyes fixed in the direction of the falling mass until I saw the dust of its disintegration rise like a vast spreading tree of fog or smoke, and heard a mighty crash succeeded by a deep and sullen rhythmic roar that seemed to make the very ear and ocean sway in synchrony.

A whiff of a very disgusting stench then assailing my nostrils, I turned from the catastrophe afar to the consternation anear, and found that I was being deserted rapidly by my surrounding foes, sculling in every direction shoreward, and that the flow of the mephitic steaming fluid had ceased—but not before destroying the life of the drummer, as I inferred from seeing his body floating about without motion in the blackish fluid which filled his boat to overflowing.

CHAPTER X.

The next day the inflated cordon was removed from around the vessel by a number of boatmen who were noticeably timid about approaching, and I learned afterward that the object of the tube was to serve as a floating dam to confine the poisonous volcanic fluid, poured through the hose, around the vessel—the fluid, like oil, being lighter in density than water and floating on it, accordingly.

Then followed an intermission of commotion among the boatmen and the people ashore which kept me in a tension of suspense, freely perspiring betimes, and rapidly walking to and fro to keep down in muscular action my accumulating nervous excitement.

At length I observed a number of men erect a high platform in the bow of one of their largest boats, and fix to it a flight of steps leading from the floor of the boat to the top of the platform. I inferred from this that the next party to visit me would attempt to board the vessel from this platform; and in order to blow the structure to pieces on its approaching in a hostile manner or with anybody or anything secreted on board, I put the brass cannon in the bow in order and loaded it with a variety of missiles, butnails and spikes especially.

But the platform consisted wholly of a kind of lattice or open work, and with the glass I could see plainly that nothing was secreted in or beneath it; and when the passengers appeared on the boat to the number of sixteen I saw they were all old men, clad in long robes of a light blue color and curiously wearing long beards of divers gaudy colors and having on their heads a kind of university tile of a circular shape and of the same color as their robes; and holding each in his right hand a large folding fan, similar to the fan in common use in the United States, and in his left a cluster of little compressible bags attached to a common slender stem—evidently a kind of compound syringe.

They stood two by two behind the platform as the boat was pushed toward the vessel by a number of boatmen in smaller boats astern, some with poles and others with oars; and when the platform came to a point about an oar's length from the bow of the vessel where I stood the more venerable looking of the two old men nearest the foot of the flight of stairs, ascended tremulously to the top of the platform and stood before me face to face.

He was an imposing personage naturally, with a big and shapely head, a grand forehead and an unusually long nose with a flexible tip and somewhat flaring nostrils, blue eyes, small mouth and chin, drooping shoulders and a small, shrunken body, but a most fantastic and ludicrous fop artificially; his long silky hair arranged in ringlets and dyed of various gaudy colors, like his long, flowing beard; his face and neck covered with a white powder: his cheeks and lips painted a bright red; and his face ornamented otherwise with a number of black patches of divers geometric shapes; while to each ear was suspended by

a silken cord a beautiful pearl of the largest size and around his neck hung a string of similar jewels. In audition I observed that his hands were so remarkably small that I concluded at once that they had been bandaged and atrophied in his youth, after the manner of the feet of the Chinese women of rank.

Howsoever, in despite of his marvelous make-up, I bowed in profound reverence to the old man, and said: "I am heartily glad to see you, and welcome you and your companions."

But instead of returning my salaam or replying in words, the old man laid one of his little wrists across the other for a moment, then with a most delightful self-complacency he deliberately opened his big fan and waved it several times before him, seemingly to intimate to me what he intended to do or how he purposed to communicate with me. He then squeezed in rapid succession a number of the little compressible bags and caused a perceptible spray to come out of the slender nozzle in little spurts; and at the same time he folded and unfolded his fan, and waved and fluttered it in such a manner as to lead me to suspect an intelligent relation with the contents of the little bags. This was confirmed to me when I found my nostrils regaled with a series of most agreeable odors, both simple and complex, from pungent and spicy to such combinations as I can compare only to the variously perfumed atmosphere of a Pennsylvania forest at sunrise in June.

I learned afterward that this performance with perfumes was another of the many modes of conveying intelligence in the marvelous country to which I had come, and in due time I was able to get an interpretation of the old man's communication to me as follows:

"I Popa-tilo, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, Number One of the First Sixteen of the College of the Wise Men, by order of the Twenty-five Governing Women of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona waft these perfumes. May they enter the nostrils of the most marvelous of men and increase his knowledge to the mutual understanding and welfare of himself and the people of Revi-lona."

At this point I cut short the unintelligible communication of the venerable man by withdrawing for a moment to the captain's cabin and returning with several glasses and a bottle of brandy, the bouquet of which I fancied was as delightful as any of the complex perfumes with which the old gentleman was regaling me; and having drawn the cork and poured out a sample, I threw it in the air in the direction of the old man and fanned the air with my hat in imitation of the performance which I had seen him make with his fan.

He sniffed the odor of the liquor in an instant, and by smiling and laying his folded fan against his breast and breathing long and gently he satisfied me that the scent was most agreeable to him, and that we had in common at least one word from the dictionary of perfumery.

With gestures then I invited him to come aboard—going so far in my anxiety to make my friendly feelings known to the inhabitants of the mysterious country before me, as to extend and offer the bottle of brandy to him.

That brought him; for upon a signal given by him to the boatmen astern of his barge, the platform was moved forward until it came in contact with the side of the ship, and I had the ineffable pleasure of assisting him and his fifteen companions—in natural wisdom and artificial folly—in stepping aboard **The Southern Cross.**

Here they formed in a semi-circle in front of me, and after they in

rotation had sniffed at the mouth of the bottle, and showed in one way or another an appreciation of the delectable bouquet, I poured out a small quantity in the glass, and bowing to them and smiling and saying: "To our better acquaintance, gentlemen, and the happiest relations for all time between the United States of America and the enlightened realm of Antarctica before me," I drank the liquor with a significant gesture of an all-pervading relish, to show them that the fragrant fluid was delightful not only to the nostrils but also and especially to the palate and stomach.

They looked convinced but curious to investigate for themselves; and forthwith I poured out and handed to each about a sixteenth part of the contents of the bottle as nearly as I could gauge it by the rule of thumb; and I was gratified to find that they accepted it without fear, tasted with visible pleasure and swallowed with manifest delight.

As I did so, moreover, I noted with surprise that the large heads and long robes of the old men had increased their apparent stature greatly beyond the actual—that none of them in fact was over five feet in height; and glancing over the side of the ship at the boatmen below, I saw that they, too, while well-developed muscularly, were low in stature—as tall, perhaps, as the Japanese, but of a more shapely build.

In due time, then, with great gravity—relieved betimes by a faint flushing of the neck and face and an unwonted brilliancy of the eye—the foreman of the fantastic ambassadors resumed his address, with his assortment of perfumes and elaborate fanning—an address, which, as I afterward learned was as follows:

"To continue my remarks (literally, fanning the sweet-scented flowers of knowledge) for many centuries (literally, score-scores) after the isolation by ice of the country before you from the rest of the world, the imprisoned people fought like senseless savages among themselves until all the most discordant elements—or the men in general—were annihilated. Thereupon among the survivors who had been taught by the experience of the past the necessity of suppressing or subordinating themselves wholly to the common purpose of preserving themselves in their peculiar circumstances, the foundations were laid of the commonwtalth of Revi-lona, the country to which you, the most marvelous of men to us, have come in your most marvelous of boats. This happy event occurred 3243 years ago; and ever since the commonwealth has continued to exist substantially as it was founded by the survivors of the preceding wars (as I have said), who, among the adults were mainly women; and who *now* are in control of the government as then. Naturally, accordingly, in this long period of peace, the engines and weapons of our former warfare have turned to dust; the art of war has been forgotten, except as a matter of curious contemplation by the students of our ancient history (literally, as a very peculiar odor found by the nosers about in the continually accumulating rubbish heaps of the past); and everything that tended to disturb in any way the profound tranquility that reigned, was suppressed immediately and effectually. In fine, during this long period the commonwealth of Revi-lona has been in a state of perfect equilibrium—self-sustaining, by an elaborate and rigid system of subdivision of labor, happy, and seemingly to us capable of existing indefinitely in the future—or as long as any change of idea, habit, interest or object in life shall be prevented.

"When, accordingly, you, the most marvelous of men, appeared in your most marvelous of boats you created a disturbance amongst us

at once which threatened the dissolution of our happy country; and the Twenty-five Governing Women, after consulting with the College of Wise Men (of whom the sixteen before you are among the oldest members in good health, physical and mental), determined to drive you back into the unknown world again; or, having failed in that which seemed to them to be the most humane way of getting rid of you, to destroy you and your boat so completely that not a trace of either would remain. In this, however, our inexperienced people have failed, and the disturbance originally created by you has been increased many fold, by reason of our failure in part, but especially by the exhibition of your sublime courage, as a single man against a myriad, and your skill in the use of a weapon of war so strange to us as to be utterly incomprehensible and dreaded accordingly.

"In view of all which we, the sixteen members of the College of Wise Men, representing the Twenty-five Governing Women of Revi-lona, come to you humbly and respectfully to implore you in the magnanimity of spirit which must be in a man of your unparalleled courage, skill and resources, to spare the happy country before you (literarly, to refrain from touching the beautiful bubble in the sunshine before your eyes), and return to the country from which you have come, with the blessings of the grateful people of Revi-lona.

Moreover, the Twenty-five Governing Women cannot conceive that you, the most marvelous of men in the most marvelous of boats, should be in want of anything; but if your supply of food and water should be inadequate to enable you to go back to your country your baskets and casks will be replenished freely. And should you desire to take back to your native country any treasure or trophy from this isolated (literally) garden of sunshine in a boundless wilderness of ice, which, for many, many centuries has never seen another stranger, the following will be given you: Twenty bales of silken goods of divers colors and patterns, sixteen crates of the finest pottery, useful and ornamental, ten cases of the finest wickerwork and plaited ware, baskets, mats, sandals, headgear, and the like; twelve jars of pearls of the largest size and of the most perfect shape and lustre; and fifteen of the most beautiful young women of the country, representing the five types of human perfection known to us, with a bountiful supply of food and clothing for them.

"Consider, and graciously yield to our imploring, most marvelous and magnanimous of men."

The address ended, of which, of course, at the time, I had not the faintest conception, and believed it to be an apology for their attempt to destroy me with some unknown, scalding, stinking fluid, and a scheme to find out the secret of my coming and my resources. I responded in a few words, but no matter here what I said, for my hearers could not understand my mode of conveying intelligence any more than I could theirs, and they listened to me as if I was barking like a dog, simply to amuse them with the sound of my voice, and nothing more.

Noting which, I realized that I had not heard yet a single sound escape the lips of any of the strange people of this polar land, and I concluded that they had lost their voices through some local cause, and in consequence were obliged to make use of the several means of communicating ideas which I had observed already; and this, as I afterward learned, was the fact—a gaseous exhalation from the volcanic belt which surrounded the entire domain of the people, many centuries ago, affected the delicate membranes of the larynx to such an extent that

a general aphony was the result, with a gradual atrophy of the parts from disuse from one generation to another.

Howsoever, I withdrew again to the captain's cabin and brought a bottle of whiskey and a decanter of sherry; and, after drawing the corks, I passed the bottles along the line for the venerable gentlemen to apply to their nostrils, and sniff and sniff, and compare sniffs, and fold and unfold and waft their big fans (like so many big, blue but misshapen butterflies, with only one wing a-piece), until they were impatient seemingly to proceed further to a lingual and palatal investigation. Noting which, I gave them each a fairly big swig of the sherry, and in due time an ounce or two of the whiskey.

The result was that, absolutely ignorant of the intoxicating nature of the liquors and unaccustomed to their use, or similar stimulants, the sixteen fantastically foppish philosophers were soon in a state of inebriation and giving expression severally to their long-suppressed inner natures in a manner most interesting as well as comical to behold. One danced and grinned like an idiotic jumping-jack; another blubbered and sobbed, and wept like a child—his tears making channels through the paint and powder on his cheeks and running round the geometric patches until the wipe of a handkerchief converted all into a general and most ludicrous smear; a third and fourth quarreled and pulled each other's particolored beard and ringlets; a fifth and sixth played at quoits with their circular tiles until weary of this, when they made ducks and drakes of their own and their fellows' headgear; while three others engaged in a triangular controversy with their compound squirts until getting closer and closer together, they broke their fans over one another's heads; four scrambled together to get on the capstan; one essayed in vain to stand on his head, revealing his naked body from his heels to his waist with every attempt; another contorted his face and body and made a series of horrible grimaces at the boatmen below; and away off by himself the sixteenth stood, a statue of solid solemnity, with the most lugubrious of countenances, as if half-conscious of the gross and grotesque impropriety of himself and his companions, but in reality the stupid ass that is found in almost every convivial party, and the drunker he gets the more reserved and sanctimonious he becomes.

At length, when the stimulating effects of the liquors began to yield to the sedative, I summoned a number of the boatmen in waiting below and, with gestures, directed them to take the sixteen old men in their arms and carry them down the stairs into their barge and put off to shore at once; while I, with my gun in hand, stood at a safe distance from the comical confusion of the curious disembarkation—laughing aloud as I observed several of the old men kicking and struggling like recalcitrant children on being carried upstairs to bed, and three of them severally hugging an empty bottle to his bosom.

In all which I was human enough, in despite of my anxiety to enter into friendly relations with the strange people, to find a revengeful gratification; for I felt that the recent attempt to asphyxiate me with the fumes of some villainous compound was an unpardonable outrage on a harmless stranger in a most extraordinary extremity.

CHAPTER XI.

The landing of the drunken old men was followed by a great commotion ashore, and this having ceased, a protracted period of inactivity ensued which I looked upon as ominous of evil; and I was on the alert day and night, sleeping only for a few minutes at a time, and then surrounded with a cordon of clattering pans suspended on strings to awaken me by their slightest disturbance.

I found another disquieting circumstance in the resumption of their usual labor, by the fishermen and other boatmen of the harbor, which I regarded as a ruse to allay my suspicions; and I scanned the contents of every outgoing boat with great care, to see what was being placed behind me. But I saw only seines and ropes and baskets presumably to hold the expected catch in the open sea beyond the mouth of the harbor, or rather the great warm current which had brought me hither—nothing to justify my fears.

This continued until fully three-fourths of all the boats, by twos or threes, or little squadrons, had passed out of the harbor mouth and disappeared behind the wall or mole on each side. Whereupon a general serenity prevailed in which I surveyed and studied the several salient features of the beautiful and marvelous scene before me with a rapturous delight. . .

At length a large concourse of people appeared in the central avenue of the city, and in an irregular procession descended the gentle grade to the shore line and scattered among the remaining boats. Some carried bundles on the back, others two parcels each on a balancing pole like the Chinese; and still others in trios and quartettes at each end of a long pole between them, the largest bales, as in olden times, the sedan was carried in the streets of London. Most of the packages were deposited in the boats, while the remainder were opened on the shore and a great quantity of colored cloths and gorgeous plumes and ornaments of various kinds were displayed. With these, the boats were decked variously and especially the platform barge on which the sixteen old men had been conveyed to and from the ship.

I inferred from this extensive preparation and decoration that a more distinguished embassy than the preceding was about to visit me: but I could not allay my suspicions of treachery from the order maintained and the completeness effected, which indicated a general action in accordance with a well-devised plan and an all-important end in view.

Presently another concourse of people appeared in the central avenue, and with great precision of movement formed in two lines facing each other on opposite sides of the avenue, and presenting a beautiful spectacle by reason of the regularity of the lines and the display of harmonious colors in the peculiar garments of the people.

Then came, between the lines, five bands of musicians, playing one after the other—the first clad in red, with a variety of tamborines, drums and other instruments for beating time and making no more music—called so properly—than a fifeless martial band in the back-

woods of Pennsylvania; the second clad in orange, with a variety of harps (strung with either five strings or a multiple of five, as I afterward learned), and making a music somewhat similar to a large aeolian harp; the third clad in yellow, with a kind of lithophone among them, consisting of a number of resonant stones of various sizes and shapes, and emitting when struck a music like that of the Swiss bellringers; the fourth clad in purple, with a variety of wind instruments like the clarionet, the flute and a five-reed Pan-pipe; and the fifth clad in blue, with a harmonious combination of all the preceding kinds of instruments, and discoursing a kind of music which might be compared to an old Scotch ballad with a complicated accompaniment.

Then came following the bands a peculiar four-wheeled car, drawn by forty men clad in orange and held back in descending the sloping wharf by an equal number in a dress of the same color; and on the car I could discern plainly with the glass a gigantic tortoise, seemingly to me as big as a beehive coke oven, and in reality as I afterward learned eleven feet in length by seven in width and four in height! The legs of the enormous reptile hung over the side of the car in a great measure concealing the wheels from view and giving it the grotesque appearance of walking on tiptoe between a special van and rear guard. This gigantic tortoise, as I afterward learned, was one of five females which as the last of their species had been preserved by the government for centuries—so long that the people looked upon them as a symbol of the government of Revi-lona, subsisting from age to age in an icy environment which might be compared with propriety to the shell of the reptile. Then came fifteen persons of a taller stature than any I had seen yet; and somehow I fancied from their graceful carriage—and correctly, as I afterward learned—that they were women. They were long gowns, like the sixteen old men, but instead of a circular tile on the head, they had a peculiar headdress of matting, which in profile was shaped somewhat like the beam of an ox yoke turned upside down; and instead of the gowns being all of the same color, blue, as they walked three abreast, the first trio were clad in red and the succeeding in orange, yellow, purple and blue respectively.

And then came the most extraordinary part of the cortege, twenty-five gigantic birds, in shape somewhat like ostriches but twice as high and proportionately heavy—Morgas, as they were called by the people of Revi-lona, as I learned afterward—a word which possibly may have survived with a similar species of gigantic bird (Dinornis) in the Moa of New Zealand. These were haltered and led by separate grooms dressed in a brilliant red, and each carried a large woman clad in blue, sitting sideways on the left shoulder of the big bird, or between the base of the neck and the left wing.

All the twenty-five mounted women were gowned alike, and with a single exception wore a beautiful plume in her headdress (which was of the same pattern as that worn by the fifteen women afoot), the exception having two plumes. Their order of march also was peculiar, being in groups of five, two before and two behind and one in the middle of each group; the exceptional woman with the two plumes being the most conspicuous of all by reason not only of the extra feather in her cap, but also by occupying the middle place in the middle group. I inferred from this that she was the queen of the country to which I had come, and the twenty-four women about her her maids of honor, but in this I was in error, as will appear in due time.

In the meantime, the platformed barge had been pushed to the bow

of the ship, and a majority of the boats, carrying the great miscellany of bales and bundles, were clustered around it. The barge bore a single passenger, a man clothed in red, with a tray suspended before him which contained a number of little cups or boxes, and a pile of little round white wafers or lozenges; and at a signal given by the woman with the two plumes, the man with the tray ascended the stairs to the top of the platform and stepped aboard the vessel in the cheeriest manner imaginable.

I bowed to him courteously, and forthwith he moistened the tips of the fingers of his right hand by touching a wet sponge contained in one of the cups or boxes, and then in rapid succession he lightly touched the contents of several of the peculiar little receptacles, which, as I afterward learned, contained an assortment of sweets and spices—or more exactly, a variety of prepared flavors. Then daintily taking up with his left hand one of the wafers or lozenges, he touched it in a certain order with the flavored tips of the fingers of his right hand and passed it to me with a gesture signifying that I should put it in my mouth and let it melt on my tongue.

I took the lozenge and pretended to put it in my mouth; but afraid of being poisoned, I retained it in my hand.

And thus I became acquainted with a fourth mode of conveying intelligence among this strange people, namely, by combining flavors according to some definite plan; for, as I afterward learned, the dainty confectioner before me was in reality a messenger; and the purport of his communication was as follows:

"I, Balu-toba, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, a messenger of the Twenty-five Governing Women of Revi-lona, make these confections. Eat them and receive their import through your tongue, most marvelous of men. Some of the bales and bundles and jars in the boats before you contain a supply of food and water to replenish the stores of your big boat; others, variously colored silken goods, woven by the most expert weavers of the country; others, divers kinds of pottery; others, plaited ware and wicker-work; and still others pearls of great size and perfect shape and lustre, taken from the beds beyond the mouth of the harbor. Accept them graciously in accordance with the terms proposed to you by the embassy comprising sixteen of the eldest of the members of the College of the Wise Men, in good health and vigor, who recently visited you, and who, before leaving your presence, became stricken with a mysterious affection, by which they temporarily lost their reason, their gravity and their sense of propriety and conducted themselves like mad men and incorrigible children to the eternal disgrace of the country. Examine the provisions and goods as they are brought before you; and if they prove acceptable, indicate in such manner as is most agreeable to you, most marvelous of men, in what part of your big boat you desire them to be placed. That done, the fifteen women, who have been selected for their surpassing beauty and accomplishments among the young women of Revi-lona, will be conveyed to you in the completion of the terms referred to; and every assistance in the power of our numerous boatmen will be given you, if required, to enable you to pass out of the harbor at once."

His communication addressed to my sense of taste having been delivered, the messenger withdrew to one of the boats; and one after the other the bales and bundles and jars were brought to me, opened and closed, and piled up on the deck a short distance behind me; for I

did not think it prudent to permit more persons on board at one time than I could overcome with my fowling-piece and other weapons at hand. Nor to pass from my sight and control while I stood on guard at the bow in front of the platform and flight of steps by which access to the deck was gained. In doing which, however, as I afterward learned, I fell into a trap which the cunning people had laid for me. For the pile of provisions and goods designedly was made so high that it cut off my view of the afterpart of the ship and prevented me from seeing readily what might be going on in the harbor astern. But all will appear in due time—the platformed barge was taken back to the shore and the five trios of women, clad in five different colors, were put aboard amid the playing of all the bands and the wildest enthusiasm I had witnessed yet among the throng ashore. The attention of the crowd then being directed to the group of women mounted on the big birds, I directed my glass to them, and beheld the two-plumed woman descend from her seat to the ground by making a platform of the back of her groom, and enter the barge, and, after passing between the women drawn up on each side of the boat, ascend the stairway and stand on the platform in full view of everybody—especially myself; for, as I afterward learned, this was another of the cunningly devised schemes to keep my eyes fixed on what was going on in front of me; and a more successful lure to a man of my years and nature certainly could not have been contrived; and in consequence I kept my eyes fixed on the woman till she came so close to the ship that I could discern in her, without the glass, the most majestic and imposing woman it had ever been my good fortune to behold. I became fascinated at once, and utterly oblivious to any danger on either side of or behind me; for if I thought at all, which is doubtful, I must have concluded that a woman so superb certainly could not be a participant in any guile to a young man in my awful situation.

At length, as the barge came close to the ship, I saw that the eyes of the majestic woman were riveted on me; and I was vain enough to think that she was interested in me more as a man of comely shape and large proportions than a waif from an unknown world, in a strange craft, in a wonderful boat, and with incomprehensible weapons of war. In fact, I was positive that in the impression which I made on her—favorable or unfavorable, I could not divine from her serenity—she forgot herself for a moment and the part which she was playing in the grand ceremony; for when she withdrew her eyes from mine, she looked down at her feet, while a slight flush appeared in her face, and then around her, without turning her head, as if a little fearful some of her people had detected something unbecoming or compromising in her protracted stare.

At last we stood face to face—she on the platform and I on the deck; and for an instant we both were in a state of confusion. Happily, I was the first to recover; and after bowing and smiling and saying as pleasantly as I could: "A thousand times welcome, most beautiful woman!" I extended my hand, assisted her into the boat, and placed her on my left a little aft of the place where I stood, so that while facing her I could observe with the slightest movement everything that might be done on the platform, and in front of the ship.

I learned afterward that this was an unexpected departure from the programme of the day—the effect of an undreamed of astonishment at the sight of the extraordinary stranger, in comparison with the dwarfed and subordinated men with whom she had been accustomed,

and who, as I afterward learned, were regarded with a kind of contempt by the greatly superior women of the country, who exercised all the governmental functions to the absolute exclusion of the opposite sex.

In this situation, the majestic woman recovered her self-possession sufficiently to do what she had intended to do on the platform, namely, as the representative of the whole body of the Twenty-five Governing Women of the country, to deliver an address to me. And this she did by extending to me a silken cord, and after it had been made taut between us, held in the left hand of each, by playing upon it nimbly with the fingers of her right, as follows:

"I, Nada-nana, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, pulsate this string in the expression of the command of the Twenty-five Governing Women of Revi-lona, of whom I am one, and by whom I have been selected to represent all, as the two plumes in my headdress attest, feel and intelligently comprehend you, stranger, have come unbidden to our isolated country; and whatsoever your intentions peaceful or otherwise,, the mighty differences between us make you a menace to the existence any longer of our country in the perfection in which it has subsisted for many centuries (literally, which has been a perfect pearl, in shape and color and lustre, within the values of its parent shell, in the bottom of the sea, for scores upon scores of years). We regret that this is as I have said (literally, pulsated), but realizing that our preservation is paramount to all other considerations and the demand of necessity imperative, we have done in the overwhelming emergency what perhaps we should not have done, and we have promised to do other things in amendment and atonement, which I am here to see carried out faithfully; and that being done, to see that you go out of the harbor at once, either by your own free will, as trusting in your magnanimity we believe you will, or by such means as lie in our power. I have said—no, stranger, I have not said all. Heretofore you have been seen face to face only by men—a number of the boatmen of Revi-lona, several messengers and sixteen members of the College of the Wise Men (who unaccountably to us became insane for the time being in your company); and while they have called you the most marvelous of men, till that among us has become your unofficial appellation, only the smallest part (literally, a grain of sand from the seashore) of your marvelousness as a man among men has been told, now that you have been seen by a woman!"

In this peculiar performance I detected at once a kind of telegraphy; and while I could not comprehend the significance of any of the pulsations which I felt, at the conclusion of her communication, I boldly adventured to reply to her by means of the Morse alphabet, with which I had been familiar for several years—at the same time looking earnestly into her eyes.

"Most beautiful woman! I telegraph to you my sentiments on this improvised line, using the system which was invented by—no matter, now—you are the grandest embodiment of womanly beauty I have ever beheld, and I am repaid amply for all I have suffered in meeting you. I sincerely hope we shall become friends—the best of friends—more—more—all that man and woman may be to each other."

She recognized at once that I was replying to her; but not being able to interpret any of my pulsations, she smiled and bit her lip; and I did the same. Then she winked; and I did likewise. Then she dropped her end of the silken cord, and made a number of movements

with her lips, which I inferred—and rightly, as I afterward learned—was intended to convey a definite meaning as follows:

"Oh, how I wish I could understand you! And, oh, how I wish I had seen you before I voted for your destruction and then for your expulsion! The Twenty-five Governing Women, I am sure, would have organized a rebellion against themselves, and made you their king. But how vexed I am that you do not know what I am saying to you with the movement of my lips."

To this also I responded with the Morse alphabet, to her interest and amusement, but without imparting any intelligence, saying:

"I think if you and I were left together for a few days, we would understand each other fully. We already have progressed from our fingers to our lips; and, Great Scott! (as we used to say in the service of the Pennsylvania railroad, when Thomas A. Scott was the President of the company), but two steps more and our hearts will be thumping against each other in the perfection of comprehension!"

Then she winked at me; moving her eyelids as she had moved her lips; at the same time smiling roguishly, as much as to say, I fancied: "You cannot do that!" but in reality saying, as I afterward learned: "I do not wonder now that the wise men lost their heads in your delightful company, for I already am in danger of losing not only my head but also—my heart; if that be possible in Revi-lona, the land without love, where every emotion of the heart has been suppressed in man and woman for many centuries by the most rigid of laws and the strictest of regulations between the sexes. Oh, why was I born in this woman-ruled country! I have half a mind to go with you—will you take me, with the fifteen women whom we have selected to accompany you—or, infinitely preferably, without them?"

Whereupon, in responding to this, to show her that I not only could wink words with my eyelids as she had done, but also wag words with my ears, which presumably she could not do. I winked and wagged in turn, saying: "What, winking at me now, you bewitching woman! And alternately smiling and biting your lip, as if in a quiver between pleasure and vexation! Cease to worry, I beseech you, over anything and everything. Look at my ears and laugh!"

After this asinine performance, at which she stared in amazement and smiled in amusement, she bit her lip again in the expression of vexation, and then lowered her eyes in abstraction, while the expression of her face changed from cheerful to sad, as if the most miserable of feelings and the most melancholy of thoughts were passing through her body and mind.

Now, all this telegraphing, which had taken me a long time to describe, was done in reality in a very few minutes. Howsoever, at this juncture, while the majestic woman for the moment was more in the inner world than the outer, the appearance about the platform of the head of the first of the fifteen young women, as she ascended the flight of steps to come aboard the ship, attracted my attention, and awoke my vis-o-vis from her reverie.

I gave my hand to the young woman to assist her, and as I did so I held my breath; for I beheld in her a woman of the rarest beauty; not so tall by a head as the majestic woman who had preceded her, but infinitely sweeter, with brighter eyes and fuller lips—a rapturously voluptuous bud just on the point of bursting into the full bloom of womanhood.

And then in succession I assisted her equally beautifully com-

panions; and long before I had welcomed the last I was in a delirium of ecstasy; and had I known—or could I have learned in any way that they had been sent aboard to beguile the weariness of a homeward voyage, I at once would have set all sails and braved the terrors of all the accumulated ice of the southern polar region with the lightest of hearts!

The absolute authority of the two-plumed woman now became manifest; for in response to the movements of her lips—which I fancied had turned pale since the coming of the fifteen—they arranged themselves in a segment of a circle in front of me, with the first to enter the ship, but a step or two from their majestic ruler.

They arranged themselves also in accordance with their colors, beginning with red and ending with blue; and as I surveyed them I recognized in them five different types.

The first trio, in red, were comparatively low in stature, with glossy black hair in curling ringlets, low foreheads, dark eyes, full lips and a velvety skin of a faintly discernible duskiness, with little or no color—they, as I afterward learned, represented the Mouth, Taste or Little Finger type of manhood, as the Revi-lonanians termed it; and they had been selected not only for their beauty but also for the mirthful disposition and voluptuousness which were believed to characterize the type in its inner nature.

The second trio, in orange, were approximately as tall as the trio in red, but slighter and shapelier in build, with straight, black hair, dark eyes, symmetric features, exquisitely shaped wrists, hands, ankles and feet, and a sensitive skin with a tinge of tawny in it. They represented the Touch, Feeling or Ring Finger type of mankind; and they had been selected not only for their beauty in face and form and grace in motion, but also for the vivacity and emotional variableness which were believed to belong especially to this dance-loving type of humanity.

The third trio, in yellow, were of medium height and rounder in head, face and limbs than the others—more muscular apparently, with black, straight hair, dark eyes, small and rather immobile features and a skin with a faint suggestion of yellow in it. Their faces, moreover, in profile were comparatively flat; and while the lobes of the ears were not noticeably large, the roundness of the head projected the organs of hearing, but without marring the symmetry of the face in either a full or profile view. They represented the Ear, Hearing or Middle Finger type of mankind, and as well the trunk of the tree of humanity; and they had been selected not only for their personal comeliness but also for the good common sense, the love of ceremony and formality, the devotion to duty and the faithfulness in general which were believed to be the distinguishing inner traits of this rather stolid type of humanity in juxtaposition with the last.

The fourth trio in purple, were also of medium height (in relation to the tallest Revi-lonanion women, but in comparison with American women, equal to the tallest), with oval heads and faces, black, wavy hair in abundance, large and lustrous, dark eyes, beautifully curved lips, and a complexion, though fair, with a faintly discernible shadow in it combined with a dash of ruby red in the lip and cheek—suggesting the point of interblending between the sunny side and the shaded of a lucious peach. And they, too, had been selected not only for their extraordinary personal beauty of an essentially statuesque, pictorial or artistic character, but also for the vivid imagination, the romance, the

poesy and the exalted ideals which were believed to be embodied in this, the Eye, Seeing or Fore Finger type of humanity.

The fifth trio in blue, were approximately as tall and imposing in their appearance as the two-plumed woman who came aboard first, with ovoid heads and faces, yellow hair, ranging from coppery through golden to flaxen, blue eyes, well-developed features generally—the nose comparatively larger than in the other types, a remarkably graceful poise of the head on the neck and shoulders, and a complexion combining pearl and rose-petal in about equal proportion. They represented the Nose, Smelling or Thumb type of mankind; and they had been chosen not only for the perfection of their faces and forms, but also for the powers of comprehension and management with which they were believed to be gifted, especially along with a spirit of independence and or insubordination when obedience ceases to be a virtue.

The two-plumed woman—or Nada-nana, to call her by her name—belonged to this group, as was evident at a glance, not only from her blue gown, but also from every characteristic of the type internally, as well as externally; and as I afterward learned, all the governing women from time immemorial had been selected from this particular type, which, along with the others, had been bred with a pertinacity of purpose for many centuries, which could be realized fully only with the results in full view as they were before me.

All their garments were composed of silk, except the headdress and the sole of the sandal, which were of plaited grass; and in striking contrast with the foppish philosophers, they were neither powdered nor painted nor patched nor pearled nor pertumed nor parti-colored—simply clean, neat and trim, and as fresh and sweet in the perfection of youthful health as opening rosebuds bathed in morning dew.

But, not to interrupt the action too long with details—the arrangement of the fifteen beautiful women having been completed, Nada-nana, in the most dignified and authoritative manner—and a perceptible pallor in her countenance—addressed me by the movement of her lips as follows, as I afterward learned:

"These three women in red nearest to me are proficient in the art of cooking. They will prepare your food for you, most marvelous of men. These three in orange are proficient in the art of dancing and calisthenics. They will interest you with their rapid and graceful movements and elaborate and artistic writhings and twistings. These three in yellow are proficient in the art of housekeeping. They will keep your big boat clean and tidy and minister to all your comforts, most mar-magnificent of men. These three, in purple are unexcelled in the art of making garments and beautifying their surroundings. They will adorn your big boat with many colored bands of silk and artificial flowers and fanciful fish and snails and spiders and birds, delightful to behold. While these three in blue have been trained especially in the art of governing. They will superintend every operation of the others, exact the strictest discipline and deportment and relieve you fo every care and anxiety—happy, happy women—the only happy women in the world!"

During the delivery of this address the fifteen beautiful women kept their eyes fixed on me in a stare of agreeable amazement and insatiable curiosity, which, under other circumstances in Revi-lona would have been regarded an almost unpardonable act of impropriety and inde-

corum, if not a crime, and noticing which, Nada-nana touched in reproof the voluptuous woman at her side.

This made the woman in red pout perceptibly, and attracted me irresistibly to her lovely lips! and in an uncontrollable transport of passionate joy I caught the voluptuous woman in my arms and pressed my lips to her—no, not as a swallow daintily breasts for an instant the mirroring surface of a pool in the calm of a summer evening, but as a limpet clings to a rock in defiance of time and tide, till I was surfeited with sweetness—or, rather, till the paroxysm of my passion had passed away.

The beautiful woman was overwhelmed by my act, for such an exhibition of passion had never been seen or, perhaps, even dreamed of in the land without love since it emerged from the chaotic sea of savagery.

But no matter, believing or fancying that I saw the second of the voluptuous women in red pout a little also, I encircled her in my arms and kissed her as rapturously as I had the first—the overflowing of my emotional nature knowing no bounds.

And then, having begun on the array of beautiful women before me, I felt it a duty to continue to the end that I might not slight one for her sake, and deprive myself of a most agreeable pastime, going from one enchantment to another. But while I was about to put my arms around the ninth—or the eleventh, I cannot say exactly which, from my inability to reckon while enraptured—I detected a peculiar movement of the plumes on the headdress of Nada-nana, and suspected at once that she was signaling to the people in the great gathering of boats under and about the bow of the ship. I lowered my vision from her plumes to her face, and saw that she was in a suppressed state of violent emotion, her eyes gleaming, her cheeks pale and her body quivering from head to foot.

And scarcely had I remarked this when the ship moved backward suddenly and violently, and the great stack of bundles and bales and crates came tumbling down on the deck, and as I glanced over them I beheld a myriad of boats attached by lines to the stem of the vessel and the great flotilla in an united effort engaged in towing the ship toward the mouth of the harbor.

I interpreted the action at once as the essential part of a deeply laid scheme to destroy me or get rid of me by drawing the ship rapidly out of the harbor and then closing in against me by sinking a number of the native craft in the narrow entrance. I had been trapped, and that most ingeniously; for while I was prevented from seeing what was going on behind me by the Trojan horse in the shape of a big pile of provisions and valuable stores, and my eyes were fixed on the charms of the fifteen beautiful women drawn up in the bow before me, a number of the boatmen near the ship took the opportunity to attach a number of lines to the stern and sides of the vessel and connect it with the great flotilla of ostensible fishermen lying in concealment behind the harbor walls, the attachments being made to the ship, as I afterward learned, by a tenacious paste or glue, the product of a plant, of which great use was made by the Revi-lonanians.

And when I recognized the trap in which I had been taken I was not long in fixing my eyes on one of the principals in the treachery, the agitated Nada-nana on my left, and when I saw her attempt to gain the platform of the barge and escape from the ship while I held the

ninth—or the eleventh—of the beautiful women in my arms, I released the latter from my embrace, and with a bound or two I was at the side of the two-plumed governess and held her helpless in my powerful grasp. ..

The majestic woman was in rapid action at the moment I caught her, and naturally the motion of her limbs was continued in a struggle to escape, but when she found that she was in a flexible but unyielding vice, she became motionless, erect and rigid, and looked at me with a cold severity in her eyes as if she would chill me into relaxation by awakening in me a sense of her official power and importance and my unpardonable audacity. But I did not relax my hold; and when I saw her lips move, in commanding me to release her, as the embodiment of the authority of all the governing women of Revi-lona at the time, I put my lips to hers and received the message on the shortest and most efficient line in the world, but failed to interpret its import, not having a key to the cypher employed and being in a state of great excitement at the time.

By this time the ship had been drawn backward out of the bottom-ooze into free water and was moving perceptibly faster; and the efforts of many men were required to keep the platformed barge near enough to the vessel to enable the two-plumed governess to escape; and when they beheld her in my arms, a number of the most desperate among them made a rush for the stairway to come aboard and rescue her. I saw the movement, and divining its object I gently but forcibly pushed the governess behind me, and taking up my fowling-piece, I shot the leader through the body as he came on the platform and discharged the second barrel into the rabble in the barge below.

And again, as with the first shot which I had fired in the harbor, the report reverberated against the mountain wall and the concussion concentrating in the chasm spanned by the artificial rainbow, another large section of the casing of the stupendous structure fell as before raising a similar tree-shaped cloud of dust and seemingly shaking the land and sea in the ensuing roar.

To this, however, I paid little attention; for I was interested infinitely more in watching the panic among the boatmen about the ship and the great throng of men and women, the big birds and the enormous tortoise ashore.

The boatmen, leaving the barge adrift, with two killed and three wounded in it, scattered in every direction; in their flight, reminding me of these steamboat ducks which I had seen in great numbers fluttering in flight on the surface of the water in the Strait of Magellan and Smythe's Sound. The men and women afoot ashore ran helter-skelter up the sloping wharf toward the city. The big birds of burden crouched and leaped and ran hither and thither, now separating and now gathering together—some with trailing halters and others dragging their grooms along with them—and all tumbling and pitching their elaborately gowned and plumed riders to the right and left, until after a few moments of an apparently inextricable entanglement the Mogas, following a leader, fled with most prodigious strides into the city, leaving behind them their grooms and riders in the utmost confusion, some on their legs, some sitting and others lying flat on the ground—several of the grooms, as I afterward learned, seriously injured in the collision of the big birds, and from their kicking and pawing and trampling, like so many two-legged mules. While, by some mischance in the melee,

the triumphal car of the tortoise was tilted and the enormous reptile tumbled off and turned over on the rotundity of her back, leaving her sprawling in the most ludicrous helplessness, while her attendants followed to a man, the fleeing birds.

In the meantime the ship was moving slowly backward toward the mouth of the harbor; for the great throng of boatmen there had not been affected appreciably by the report of the gun and the roar of the falling masonry, perhaps, because they were in vigorous action at the time, pulling and tugging together with a well-defined purpose; and for an instant I was undecided what to do—either to lower as much sail and as rapidly as possible and take advantage of a favorable breeze blowing into the harbor, or to throw the anchors overboard. I decided to do the latter; but on attempting to lift the smaller of the two which were lying together in the bow, I found I was unable to do so; and turning for assistance to the women aboard, I found all but the two-plumed governess and the trio in blue cowering in consternation against the fallen down wall of bales and bundles. With gestures, then, I vehemently and earnestly besought Nada-nana to assist me; but she stood before me as immovable and irresponsive as a statue of stone. This at once, in my excitement, aroused my anger at the treacherous woman; and taking up my gun I held it point-blank at her bosom. She still stood absolutely motionless, and as I was on the point of puling the trigger, her lips began to open and close in her most bewitching mode of expressing herself, and with a breast heaving with emotion, I laid the gun aside and took the woman in my arms and kissed her impetuously again and again on her lips, her cheeks, her forehead and her eyelids. And before I had concluded this rapturous but rather shotgun-like osculation, I felt the ice in my arms melt into sympathetic humanity; and I released her in absolute confidence as to the result.

With a peculiar clapping of the hands, accompanied by a startling clucking with the tongue against the roof of the mouth, she brought the frightened women to their feet and senses in an instant; and then, with her lip-code of communicating her commands, she ordered them to assist me—she herself, and the trio in blue, directing and superintending, but not touching the metal with their hands; and in a few minutes, one after the other, the right and left bowers were cast into the harbor, and after dragging a little, caught and held securely enough to withstand a storm.

The ship seesawed a little in the strain between the anchors and the flotilla; then stood still for a few minutes; and then, under the influence of the wind against the hull and rigging, swung slowly around on the pivot of her anchors until her stern faced the city and her bow the harbor mouth. This was conclusive that the boatmen of the flotilla had cut or slackened their ropes, convinced that further pulling and tugging was futile; but why they hovered in clusters about the ship for hours I could not determine.

At length a single boatman more adventurous and daring than his fellows, cautiously sculled to the chains which held the ship; and when he found that he was not molested, he suddenly drew a large knife from under his clothing and attempted to cut one of the chains—the blade of the knife, as I afterward learned, being a piece of a pearl shell! And when he found that he could not make the slightest impression on the chain with his formidable knife, his amazement curiously took the form of consternation, and he fled precipitately; and his consternation

becoming contagious when he joined the cluster of boatmen to whom he belonged, the whole flotilla became panic-stricken and—the grandest scattering of steamboat ducks I had ever beheld was around and about me, till the ship was the only vessel afloat in the circular harbor beyond an oar's length from the shore line.

And I never comprehended this consternation fully until I learned that among the most highly prized wonders of the country of Revi-Iona was a mighty mass of meteoric iron which, in full view of a large concourse of people, had been seen to fall from the sky to the ground, and ever afterward was looked upon as a waif from another world somewhere amid the starry emblazonment above their heads; and when the daring boatman found that the anchor chain of the ship was of the same nature as the unearthly aerolite, he at once inferred that the marvelous boat and the marvelous man in it had come from the heavens also—were not of the earth, earthy, like himself, and accordingly invested with an infinity of fearful attributes forthwith.

CHAPTER XII

The second battle over, a period of profound peace followed, during which the fifteen beautiful women, under the control of the two-plumed governess, assisted by the trio in blue, made a perfect paradise of the old whaling ship; and I was happy as a big man in the prime of life and the perfection of physical health and vigor could be—keeping a careful watch all the while, however, lest I should be taken by surprise by the treacherous people. My most serious occupation was in teaching my beautiful companions the English language and learning from them the Revi-Ionanian. This I found to be exceeding complicated and difficult of acquisition, while the English proved to them to be comparatively easy. And when not engaged in teaching or learning, my leisure time was devoted to rewarding teacher and pupil for the progress which they had made severally and collectively, by kissing them one and all and over and over again, and assisting them in catching fleas. These little insects I had never noticed on board the ship before the arrival of the beautiful women, but they must have been in concealment somewhere, for they had never been seen in Revi-Iona before the coming of the ship.

At length, one beautiful, blissful day, a fortnight after the fight, I was aroused from a delicious reverie by Nada-nana, who, putting the glass in my hand, directed me to look at the top of the tower over the great arch beyond the city. I did so, and as I afterward learned, I witnessed the entombment on the top of the tower of the several heroes who had died in the defence of their country. By a peculiar process, hereafter to be described, the bodies had been preserved and encased in stone-like coffins and made a part of their own monument by being built into the body of the enormous tower. There was a great fluttering of flags at the time, not only on the tower but also along the top of the great artificial rainbow and in the streets of the city, and I recognized the fact at once that the people of Revi-Iona were intensely patriotic.

By the way, the national flag of the strange people was very curious. It consisted essentially of a peculiar figure or emblazonment on any kind of material or combination of colored silks that might form

a ground for the symbol—generally a combination of the five typic color divisions of the people, red, orange, yellow, purple and blue, arranged indifferently, vertically, horizontally, diagonally, concentrically or in a crazy-quilt -like patchwork,, and in any form, square, oblong, circular, swallow-tail, spike-tail, crescentic or the like. For, as I said before, the symbol made the material the flag. This was a circle like a hoop or belt, with a ragged fringe dependent. None of my companions could explain it to me; but long afterward I learned from the College of the Wise Men that it was a relic of the remotest past—a representation of the fringe of grass which was worn about the middle of the body by the women at the time of the formation of the petticoated commonwealth. This was displayed wherever the women gathered, while the men were fighting with one another; and naturally when the surviving women founded the new government, they retained the well-known symbol of their sex; and being conservative in the extreme as the natural preservers of the species, they continued to employ it as a symbol for ages after they had supplanted its use as a garment with woven fabrics of grass and silk.

Howsoever, the following day after the entombment of the heroes the glass was put again into my hand, and I was directed to fix my vision on the crown of the magnificent arch; and one after another I saw fifteen indistinguishable objects fall to the ground; and as I afterward learned. I witnessed in this the execution of fifteen of the sixteen members of the College of the Wise Men who had disgraced themselves and dishonored their country by their scandalous conduct while representing the Twenty-five Governing Women aboard the marvelous ship of the marvelous stranger.

One alone of the sixteen escaped the general execution. This was he who alone preserved his gravity and wore a look of severe dignity the more his companions demeaned themselves like madmen and children, and he not only escaped with his life, but also received a badge of the highest merit recognized in the country, an artificial fish of fanciful shape and divers colors—a relic, too, of the remotest past when the people were savages—being a representative or reminder of the fish which was thrown by the mother to her child when she has taken it from her breast and recognized it as something bigger, better or more able to take care of itself than before. But this was the very wise man I swore with the most voluble of oaths at my command, and the only one whom I would have executed had I been the justiciary of the country.

Most curiously, too, in the dusk of a quiet evening following the execution, while I was engaged alternately in catching fleas and contemplating the horrible slaughter of the fifteen fools who would not make wise men of themselves when they were drunk, my attention was called by the watch to a faint tapping which came from a barely discernible object on the surface of the harbor about a cable's length from the ship. It turned out to be this very exceptional wise man, who alone could retain the gravity of wisdom when intoxicated; and he was engaged in an enterprise of such peril as only men of science will, who are ever ready to make martyrs of themselves for the sake of increasing the general pile of knowledge on the seashore by laying on another grain of sand.

In the sobering of the sixteen, after their return to the city, by the merest chance one of them discovered on his person and captured

an unknown insect about the bigness of the pupil of the eye; and after a series of experiments with the little animal it was found to possess the most extraordinary powers of leaping—so extraordinary that as it was calculated with slight variations by several of the scientists if a man possessed similar powers in accordance with his bulk, he could jump from the harbor mouth to the city in one leap, and then over the great arch in a second, and to the top of the great burial tower in a third. But unhappily for science, while the wise men were adjusting the personal equation involved in their calculations, the extraordinary saltatary insect slipped from the domain of science into the country of Revi-lona at large, and had never been apprehended since, greatly to the mortification of the whole college in permitting the invaluable acquisition to science to escape from their hands.

Accordingly, the exceptional wise man, at the risk of his life, had ventured out alone at night in a little boat to secure if possible another of the little saltatory insects; for in doing so he acted in defiance of a decree of the Twenty-four Governing Women then in the city, which under penalty of death, interdicted all communication between the people of Revi-lona and the people aboard the big ship in the harbor. With respect to the risk which he ran, however, there was a difference of opinion among the justices of the realm as to the legality of the decree—some holding that it was invalid from the fact that it was the official act of only twenty-four of the twenty-five governing women of the country—a part and not the whole; and others that the authority of the twenty-five having been delegated to one of their number, the two-plumed governess now aboard the ship in the harbor, and within the confines of the country, it reposed in her until her return or judicial dethronement, which had not been proposel yet, in the disturbed state of the people.

I sided, of course, with the last-mentioned justices, that the governing power of the country rested solely in the two-plumed governess in my possession; and the upshot was that the wise man was brought aboard. Then, an agreement was made with him; that for and in consideration of one or more fleas, securely confined in a vial (and one or more cockroaches, in a bottle, and one or more rats, in a suitable cage, added there to as a gratuity, in the interest of science), he would inform himself of any conspiracy or design against Nada-nana and any scheme to work the destruction of the ship and myself, and report the same to the two-plumed governess and myself; and in the event of his being suspected as an informer and pursued, he should find an ample shield of protection under the two plumes of the governess on the deck and the Stars and Stripes at the masthead.

This agreement made and concluded, Nada-nana and the fifteen beautiful women withdrew from the presence of the wise man to collect and confine the consideration; and feeling a curiosity to test the progress which I had made in the acquisition of the various modes of communicating ideas which were in vogue among the Revi-lonanians, I began by winking at the old man. He understood me at once; and we descended to my cabin. And after I had locked the door of the little room and hung a towel over the keyhole, I unlocked the captain's hamper of liquors (which I had removed from the captain's cabin, in preparing it for the occupancy of the governess), and having selected a favorite brand, I poured out an ounce or two in a glass, and handed it to the old man, now with the significant artificial fish hanging under

his chin, in addition to his powder and paint and other ornamentation. He took it, and as he did so I concluded that perhaps it was not so much his interest in ascertaining the exact length of the leap of a flea that brought him aboard at the risk of his life, but to get another glorious sniff and swig of the most marvelous of fluids of the most marvelous of men.

By this time the dusk of evening had deepened into darkness and the fleas and roaches and rats had been captured and caged, whereupon the old man, having taken a nightcap, was lowered into his boat and pushed off silently into the night, as sober and as solemn and as wide-awake as the long-earned owl of Virginia—to all appearances, at any rate.

CHAPTER XIII.

In reality, however, the little old foppish philosopher, who had been decorated with the venerable fish for his sobriety, was as drunk as a lord; and before reaching the shore, he fell asleep in his boat and did not awake until he had fallen into the hands of the harbor guard in the morning. Whereupon, with the evidences of his having violated the order of the Twenty-four Governing Women, in the bottles and the cage, he was arrested, and in due time, by due process of law, he was brought for trial before the justiciary of the country—a board composed wholly of men; for in the course of ages the governing women of Revi-lona had learned that with all their faults and weaknesses and frivolities in dress and delight in destroying one another, the men were better judges than the women, because they were more rational and less emotional, as they were also better architects and builders, inventors, historians, mathematicians and scientists in general, and utilized accordingly.

There were two counts in the indictment against the man of science; first, treason, in giving aid and comfort to an enemy of the country; and second, leze majesty, in violating the order of the Twenty-four Governing Women which interdicted all communication between the people or Revi-lona and the people aboard the marvelous ship of the marvelous stranger in the harbor.

With respect to the first count, there was a double doubt as to a matter of fact. First, whether or not the wise man did give any aid and comfort to the enemy in carrying away from the big boat in the harbor certain insects and four-legged long-tailed hairy animals, the nature of which was unknown to the wise men of Revi-lona; and second, whether or not the marvelous man in the marvelous boat was an enemy, seeing that he had acted solely in the defensive. And the benefit of this double doubt, as is a matter of fact, was given to the defendant, in accordance with the law of the land. So, with respect to the second count, there was a double doubt as to a matter of law—first, whether or not the order of a part of the governing power of the country, albeit in the relation of twenty-four to twenty-five, is as binding on the subjects of the realm as an order of the whole; and second, whether or not the order of twenty-four of the governing women could affect in any way the twenty-fifth in whom the power of all had been delegated, and who was still living and presumably in

the absence of any proof to the contrary, still engaged in the execution of her governmental mission. And the benefit of this double doubt as to a matter of law, in accordance with the law of the land, was given to the prosecuting censor in the name of the commonwealth.

Accordingly, there was a double doubt on each side, and who should determine the preponderance of two equals? The precedents of the court were appealed to in vain; but in as much as the upholding of a **de facto** government and the sacrifice of an individual is preferable to the upholding of an individual and the sacrifice of a **de facto** government, the judges decided against the wise man, condemned him to death, and sent their decision and sentence to the Twenty-four Governing Women for their approval or disapproval, as the case might be.

They approved the decision and sentence, of course, for otherwise they would have knocked down the very props which supported them.

And in due time I had the pleasure of witnessing the falling of the wise man from the crown of the artificial rainbow to instant death; for I am free to say I did not like the old man—his behavior under the influence of liquor was such a reflection on mine that I could not think of it without wishing him out of the way without any scruple as to the method.

But the remaining members of the College of the Wise Men to whom he belonged were outraged by the act, and irrepressible in their denunciation until, at the happy suggestion of one of the Twenty-four Governing Women, the fleas and roaches and rats which were found on the person of the traitor were presented as a kind of weregild to the college, in amendment and atonement for the loss of their fellow; and the storm subsided.

CHAPTER XIV.

Betimes, however, on reflection, I was horrified at the sentiment of satisfaction which I felt at witnessing the execution of the simple old scientist; but my periods of horror were of short duration. A great change had come over my disposition, and instead of being a mighty river of the milk of human kindness, overflowing my levees on the slightest appeal for sympathy and charity from my fellow man, as in the past, I was a narrow and capricious stream of the vinegar of selfishness, spreading and contracting, smiling and splashing, or tumbling headlong in a cataract, as the whim of the moment possessed me, with a shameless indifference to the feelings of the loveliest and most affectionate women in the world who ever ministered to the happiness of mortal man. The truth is, I had become surfeited with the sweets of woman's society; and my love had turned not altogether to loathing, but a feeble and fickle appetite along with a wayward and uncertain daintiness.

For hours at a time I would seclude myself in my securely locked cabin or perch on the loftiest spart of the rigging—anywhere to get away from the encircling arms and loving lips of one or other of the beautiful women, who having been liberated suddenly from a thraldom of suppression of every sexual emotion—they and their ancestors before them for centuries—were utterly irrepressible and insattiate in their demands. Then I would get drunk and stay drunk indefinitely; and in the process of getting sober I would swear that I would be again in the awful chasm in the circumpolar ice drifting on the mysterious current, so be it I might be alone, rather than in the purgatory into which my paradise had been transmuted!

Then my mood would change, and in a kind of childish glee I would play at tag and blind man's-buff and pussy-wants-a-corner, and the like, with the youngest of the beautiful women; or in the silliest of frivolity for four and twenty hours permit them, only in squads of eight and only once in the course of the day, to kiss the tips of the fingers of my outstretched hands. And then, perhaps, for an hour or two, the big heart in my big body would assert itself, and the pallor would flee from the faces, the tears from the eyes, and the trembling from the limbs of the lovely women, and purgatory would be paradise again—the past forgiven in a bewilderment of rapturous hugging and tugging and a future of unalloyed ecstasy promises over and over again in a smothering of delicious kisses.

In one of these an ending moods, after an aggravation on my part which threatened the dissolution of our social union—or our little **imperium in imperio,** if you will—I consented to gratify a curiosity which rivaled in intensity the affection of the enchanting sixteen. This was, to see what was contained in the several drawers beneath the bunk in my cabin, which, drunk and sober, I had been careful to keep under lock and key.

And possibly not since the evolution of the art of dress from the stage of the savages of the Strait of Magellan and the spirit of investigation in man and woman from the curious stare of an antelope at something strange on the plains, has there been seen on the planet so great a confusion of astonishment, admiration and greed of possession as followed the carrying of the drawers from the cabin to the deck and taking out the miscellany of female apparel and belongings which they contained!

So extreme was the excitement, indeed, and contagious, that I became—no, not so much interested as the sixteen beautiful women, for that was a physical impossibility, but—as much interested as it was possible for a man; and as the wondering women could not conceive how the several articles of dress were put on and taken off, and how a woman would look in any of them, or in a combination of several or all, I consented, after a word of coaxing and promising, to instruct them, with respect to the donning and doffing of the garments, as well as my limited knowledge of the intricate operation would permit, and leave them to judge of the several effects themselves, provided——

But before I could express the provision, all—the most majestic of women, Nada-nana, the two-plumed governess, included—wanted to wear the marvelous garments first; and to end the contest, I declared that the first to be disrobed of her native garments from head to foot should be the first to be clad in the foreign.

The scene that followed beggars description. The headdresses and sandals flew in every direction. Sixteen sashes followed. Then came a marvelously rapid untying of a series of little supporting bowknots on the shoulders, accompanied with a shaking of the body; and as nearly simultaneously as I could determine in the complexity and rapidity of action, sixteen silken garments fell in encircling folds to the deck, and sixteen embodiments of womanly beauty stood before me, the like of which perhaps has never been seen in the northern hemisphere since the peerless Phryne and her rivals shaped the marbles of ancient Greece.

And here, while the sixteen beautiful women are wrangling about the prize for priority to the minutest fractional part of a divisible instant, let me describe, in parenthesis, the dress of the people of Revi-lona. This, as far as I am acquainted with the costumes of different peoples of the earth, was unique, and not without decided advantages in tropic and sub-tropic regions. The habit was essentially the same for both sexes and children, and consisted of two pieces of silk in the web, or other material, of a length suitable to the wearer; the one with a head-hole in the middle and worn poncho-like over the front and back of the body; and the other with head and arm holes, worn in such a manner as to cover the sides—or poncho-like, sideways. To these simple garments were added a waistband or sash of variable width, tied in a bow-knot over the left hip, and a variable number of ribbon fastenings across the front and back holding the two edges of the lateral poncho together, and securely covering the body in an erect or bending posture, or in the wind, and permitting the freest use of the limbs. In length the habit worn by the women fell to the feet, while that of the girls, the wise men, the judges, the architects and the like, terminated at the calf of the leg; and that of the boys, the boatmen and the workmen in general at the knee. The headgear was equally simple, consisting of variously shaped pieces of matting or

plaiting laid on the top of the head and held in place by a band under the chin; the band passing through a slit on each side and over the top. The footgear was also simple in shape, but peculiar in construction, being a kind of sandal laced with bands over the foot; the sole consisting of several layers of matting and silk united and compacted in flaxible and durable manner by means of the tenacious paste or vegetable glue, to which I have referred already, and shaped to the foot before the hardening of the glue.

From which it will be noted by the curious in such matters that the needle was not in use in Revi-lona and that neither pins nor buttons nor hooks and eyes were employed. Nor pockets, I may add; for after the manner of the Japanese, small articles either were tucked in the folds of the waistband or suspended to it by means of a short string with a ball attached to the end to prevent its slipping under the belt and thus obviating the necessity of tying.

To proceed now to the introduction of a widely different kind of apparel in material, manufacture, combination and special adaptation to the exigencies of a vastly different climate and civilization. I decided that the sixteen beautiful women before and about me had disrobed at the same instant of time, and were entitled equally to the reward. But this was not satisfactory. Then I proposed to clothe the eldest first; but as I might have found a similar number of young ladies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, none would admit that she was the eldest. And then to end the matter arbitrarily I concluded to put one or more pieces of the apparel on each, as I might pick them up from the pile on the deck with my eyes shut, so that they all would be the first to wear one or more of the wonderful garments from another world.

I shut my eyes accordingly—or pretended to do so—and groped about till I got my hands on a gaily trimmed summer hat, comprising in its make-up ribbon, artificial flowers and cherries, bead and bangles of jet, and a beautiful humming bird with outstretched wings. And this I put on the head of the governess, Nada-nana, in lieu of her two plumed piece of matting; and, of course, I put it on wrong end foremost; for where in the world could you find a man who could or would dress a woman correctly or as a woman would? And I did not discover my blunder until the majestic woman began to exhibit the marvelous headdress to her admiring and envious associates still in a state of nature, by strutting about on the deck and tossing her head saucily to one side and the other, and then surveying herself in every conceivable attitude in the handglass (which formed a most interesting part of the toilet articles of the captain's daughter), when I saw her lovely lips petulantly quiver out, "But where is the rainbow in the form the the little flying bird?" and, looking for an instant more at the hat than the beautiful woman, I discovered the mistake I had made and rectified it at once.

I then went to the other extreme—as usual with me, in all my relations with the better and by all odds the more beautiful half of humanity—and put a pair of striped stockings on the lovely feet and rapturously rounded limbs of one of the voluptuous trio formerly clad in red, and with great care and exactness clasped a dainty pair of silver-buckled garters around the stockings in the lovely little valley that lies between the knee and the gentle swelling of the calf of the leg. Then came the shoes—a fine pair of buttoned gaiters, and, of course, again I got the right shoe on the left foot and the left shoe

on the right foot, and had to take them off and put them on again correctly, and fasten with my fingers one by one the long row of buttons; when if my everyday wits had been about me I might have secured them in one twentieth of the time with a hairpin, or the ivorn-handled buttoner which belonged to the toilet set at my elbow. Then came another strut on the deck; the high heels of the shoes marring somewhat the gracefulness of the gait of the beautiful woman by causing her to throw her knees and shoulders a little forward of their true position and her hips and head a little backward, but not interfering in the least with the display of the wonderful articles of dress.

Then I essayed to put on a third of the beautiful women—one of the trio formerly clad in orange—a flannel union-suit, and failed; for, for the life of me I could not contrive to get the complex form of the woman into the simple garment, turn it inside out and upside down as I would, and thrust her this way and that. But finally I succeeded, and I was repaid well for my trouble in witnessing first a parade on the deck alone, second with the women with the shoes and stockings and garters on her left and in order that the combination might be inspected, third with Nada-nana wearing the summer hat on her right for the same purpose, and fourth between the two others—with an indescribably ludicrous effect to me, but simply amazing and fascinating to the beautiful women.

Next, I put on a fourth a daintily embroidered cambric chemise; but whether I was right or wrong in making the beautiful woman get into the garment feet foremost I do not know. Then I put on a fifth a pair of ruffled drawers, and whether or not I was right in buttoning them before I confess also I am ignorant. Then came—after the usual promenade on deck, alone and in combination—the fitting and putting on of a corset about the waist of the sixth of the beautiful women. This was one of the most mysterious of the several articles of dress to the engrossingly curious women. One insisting that it was a kind of headgear; another that it was worn on the back of the neck, the cup-like cavities in the front of the garment fitting over the shoulders; while a third maintaining that it should be worn lower down, over the hips; and nothing that I could say would satisfy the beautiful women that the constricting encasement of the waist was an essential or necessary part of the attire of a woman in any civilized country on the face of the globe; and one of them by chance, characterizing it, if used as I declared, as a coffin for the living, the article of dress was known by that name ever afterward.

Then came the adjustment of a bustle over the hinder parts (to use a biblical phrase, from the version of King James) of a seventh —the slenderest of the sixteen, whom I had selected for the purpose. This was followed by the merriest laughter (of a sibilant character) from the beautiful women which I had heard escape from their lovely but voiceless lips, as the exhibitor of the article of civilized dress in the northern hemisphere paraded up and down the deck, whisking the fashionable imitation of the natural hump of the Hottentot woman, up and down and to the right and left, in a rollicking spirit of mockery and mirth.

This hilarious performance over, I adjusted separate articles in turn on the remaining nine of the beautiful women; and at this juncture I verily believe the deck of the old whaler presented a more fan-

tastic, ludicrous and attractive scene than ever yet has the stage of comic opera.

All this occupied a half a day, and after the excitement and amazement over the exhibition had subsided somewhat, I selected Nada-nana to be clothed in the several garments alone—or dressed from top to toe, lik an Amrican lady—she, their recognized governess, being the least likely to excite an envy that might be converted into enmity.

To start with, she had on the hat already straight, and the humming bird in front. So I had no more trouble with that; and I got along very well with the stockings, garters and shoes—greatly to my surprise with the last, for the governess was a remarkably large woman. But when I came to the chemise and drawers I had not olny the difficulties which I experienced before with these garments, but also an additional—a most perplexing question, whether I should tuck the tail of the former into the latter, as an American man adjusts the tail of his shirt in his pantaloons, or leave it flowing and fluttering freely on the outside, as, I believe, a Chinese gentlemen does. And being a patriot, of courre, I decided in favor of the American style. Then came the corset and the bustle. Then, with some deliberation, I selected a combination of ruffled and embroidered skirts, white and colored—without regarding the differences and proprieties of summer and winter wear—and fitted them over the bustle and hips of the beautiful woman; and greatly to the astonishment of all, for they could not understand the sense of concealing one lovely garment under another.

Then I essayed to put on in turn a lace-trimmed gown of silk and a dainty wrapper of lawn, but failed in self-confessed humiliation and ignominy. With a colored overskirt, a jaunty shirt-waist, a belt and a collar, however, I was satisfactorily successful, and I fancied for an instant that I was again in Pennsylvania, when I saw the beautiful woman in the familiar attire of *my* native state.

Then came an adjustment of the most fascinating of the minor articles, the plain and jeweled rings on the fingers of the beautiful woman, the bracelets around her wrists, the necklaces around her neck, a brooch at her throat, the watchguard around her neck and the dainty little jeweled watch under her belt; after which, in the absence of perforations in the lobes of her ears, the earrings were held to the lobes to show the manner in which they were worn, like the pearls suspended to the ears of the foppish wise men of Revi-lona.

At these, however, all the beautiful women turned up their noses, as ornaments suitable only for men. So the cosmetics and the perfumes found among the toilet articles were set aside as masculine expedients to make up for a want of feminine beauty.

They were illogical in this, of course, as women always are; and in proof thereof the governess was delighted with a pair of five-buttoned lavender-colored kid gloves which I put on her hands with some difficulty, and which, in my opinion, were a sorry spectacle in comparison with her hands and wrists in a state of nature. But, no matter—this was followed by an explanation of the uses of a dainty handkerchief, an ivory cardcase containing cards with the name of Julia Montgomery on them, a leather portmonai containing several pieces of money—so mysterious to them, as to be utterly incomprehensible even after an explanation—a shawl and a dotted veil.

Then to complete the toilet of the majestic governess, I opened a beautiful parasal, and after explaining its use, I put it in her dainty

gloved hand, and away she went up and down the deck, the most marvelous comet of female apparel that ever appeared in the austral heavens—in her imagination, presumably, calling on her associates in succession and converting them into stones of a greenish color with astonishment and envy.

At this culminating point of the exhibition, I returned to my cabin to tipple and snooze and dream—perchance that I was promenading the sunny side of Pittsburgh's most fashionable avenue on a Saturday afternoon in a perfect maze of the latest styles.

At another time—to give another example of the degree to which I had degenerated—to relieve the monotony of my existence in a surfeit of sweets, I got out the medicine chest and administered a dose of castor oil to each and every one of the sixteen beautiful and affectionate women, under the penalty for refusal of not receiving a kiss for a week. After which, on finding accidentally in the chest a little packet of vaccine points, I vaccinated them all in different parts of the body, for the silly reason which I assigned to myself in my debasement that the usual space on the upper and outer part of the left arm had been pre-empted by the official tattooer and registrar general of the realm—the mark by which each was known, and the only means by which her lineage could be traced by the genealogists (for a most beneficial but extraordinary purpose, as I should have occasion to reveal in a subsequent chapter) appearing in a significant series of indellible dots.

CHAPTER XV.

Now, to go back a little in time in order to connect a sequence of events.

Soon after the coming aboard of Nada-nana and the fifteen beautiful women, on striking a match to light my pipe, I learned from the astonishment which the little flame created among them that fire was unknown in Revi-lona. They called it a butterfly of light, and endeavored to catch it with their hands. This was amusing to me; while upon reflection I realized that the ship was not in danger of being burned by the strange people which I had dreaded from the first, and that I possessed in this old element of our forefathers an incalculable power and means of defense, if employed at the critical moment; but in what manner to use it I could not divine. Happily, one evening, when I had lit a lamp to continue the reading of a book which interested me, one of the trio in purple poetically termed the wonderful light a night-eye; and some time afterward, when I had acquired a certain proficiancy in the art of winking words, as well as expressing myself in the other modes of communicating intelligence which were practiced by the Revi-lonanians, I conceived the idea that I might make use of the ship's lanterns as a ready and astonishing means of communicating after night with the people ashore or around me in the harbor, when the emergency should arise.

Possessed with this happy thought, as I regarded it, I put the lanterns in order and kept them in a readily accessible place, for use at a moment's notice; and happily I divulged my intentions to Nada-nana.

But as time wore on and I became degraded by my excesses I left more and more the care of the ship to the watchfulness of the women

and went to bed either boozy or as full as a goose, as the case might be, utterly oblivious to the fact that I was surrounded by a country full of enemies seeking my destruction by day and night with unknown resources at command and with increasing daring and ardor.

But happily as I became indifferent to danger and put all in jeopardy, there was one aboard who became the more watchful, the two-plumed governess; and when the critical moment came in the middle of a gloomy night, she alone was awake on deck and apprehended the imminent danger we were in by detecting several of the signalings by sound-made use of by the beleaguering host, while I lay in bed in a drunken sleep.

I was not so drunk, however, that I did not take the alarm and comprehend her electric tapping with her finger-tips on my forehead. "Awake! awake! for we are surrounded with all the boats in the harbor, each with a heavy stone in the bow, and projecting toward the ship a surface smeared with the tenacious glue of the country; so that when the boat is driven to the ship the stone will stick to the latter. And so many are the boats that should only the half of them affix their burdens, the vessel will sink with the accumulated weight. Arouse yourself! Quick! Quick! Or we shall all perish! Get your gun and shoot in any direction for we are surrounded. Quick! Quick! For they are preparing to rush in concert to the ship!"

I have said that I was not so drunk that I did not comprehend every significant tap of the watchful woman; and when I learned of the extraordinary manner in which the determined people were about to bombard the vessel and sink her by the weight alone of the missiles of destruction, I laughed outright and pulled on my pantaloons as deliberately as if I were officiating at a funeral. Then, staggering to my feet, I took a big drink of whiskey to sober up on, and for no other reason than to antagonize the noble woman at my side, who urged me to get my most effective weapon of war, in her estimation, the double-barreled shotgun, I lighted the ship's lanterns, after a dozen or more attempts, and with one in each hand, assisted by the noble woman I staggered to the deck.

At this instant the signal had been given by the commander of the flotilla to concentrate as rapidly as possible on the ship, and the boatmen were all in vigorous action; but when the mysterious lights flashed over the surface of the water the boatmen stared in astonishment and fear, wavered in the course in which they had started and slackened their speed.

I saw or rather felt instinctively that the critical time had come to use the lanterns as the horrible eyes of different colors of a gigantic night-seeing monster; but from the effects of the last big drink which I had taken, I was powerless to do anything, and stood in a wobbling way only from the support which was given me by several of the beautiful women who had been awakened by the tumult. Then I was conscious for a few moments of a series of crashes around the vessel, repeated shocks that staggered me, and a great confusion in which I sank to the deck an insensible beast when I should have been a demigod.

CHAPTER XVI.

When I became sober I found that I was bound securely in my cabin, but attended as usual by the beautiful women; who, however, would not pay the slightest attention to any of my commands or make any response to my questions and pleadings.

At length, under the strictest regimen, my mind became clear, and I realized fully the enormity of my offence and submitted patiently to my punishment; but only for an hour or two, when I burst into a storm of passion, threatening to kill everybody in the country with fire and sword and shotgun; but without inducing my captors to release me or abate a jot of the anguish of my confinement in ignorance of what had taken place, and what was going on around me.

Finally, after a prolonged period of penitence and silent submission the two-plumed governess entered my cabin; and having bid my attendants withdraw, she spoke to me with her voiceless lips as follows:

"My Beloved:—When you are more than all of the men whom I have known, I obey you as an infinite superior; but when you are less than the least of the men whom I have known, through your inordinate and incomprehensible love of liquor, I am compelled for the preservation of the new and glorious world which you have opened to me, for myself, for the fifteen beautiful women who have been sacrificed to your whims and caprices by the distresses of my beloved country, and for my beloved country, to treat you as a hideous worm, disregard your writhings in anguish and assume the sole control of the destiny of all aboard this ship—and, perhaps, of all my beloved people ashore.

"Know, then, what has taken place since you fell to the deck a senseless stone, while you and all those whom you affected to love were surrounded in the dead of night by a host of enemies who were actuated by the most patriotic of motives to effect your destruction at any cost of life to them.

"When you failed to be the awe-inspiring monster to my beloved people which you intended to be I put my foot on you as a shameful experience of the past; and taking the lanterns, I stood in your stead and terrified my beloved people to such an extent that a hundred and eighty-two perished in the confusion, crushing one another's boats by collision in the darkness and in their bewilderment at the sight and speech of the awful eyes, and drowning miserably in the harbor. I saying to them with simulated winkings: 'Behold! I have eyes that see in the night! And from their bigness you may estimate my gigantic size, and how many of you I can tear to pieces with my teeth and swallow at a gulp! Come on! For I am hungry tonight: come on, though you be in number as the sands of the sea shore!'

"Thus our destruction was averted; but only for a short time, as I learned from several of the boatmen who clung to the anchor chains until the break of day, when the panic having spent its force, they were rescued by a number of their fellows whom I summoned by signaling to their aid. The next attempt cannot fail; and at any moment now it may be put in execution, and that without any risk of life to

any of the boatmen. The harbor mouth has been closed and cemented; and a vast accumulation of the poisonous oily waters of death from the awful boiling spring on the confines of our country, is held in readiness to be poured in a flood and spread as a sheet in a moment or two over the whole surface of the harbor, killing everything in the water beneath and everything in the air above, you, me and the fifteen beautiful women aboard the vessel—all; for nothing can breathe the fumes which arise from this volcanic fluid and live. The greatest engineer of the country is at the head of this operation, and the repeated failures of the past, instead of disheartening and restraining the people have made them the more determined and aggressive. In fine, as you have incited in me the age-suppressed feelings of love until they have become the masterful passion of my existense, so you have aroused in the men of my beloved country the spirit of war that has slumbered among them for untold centuries; and as long as the cause of its awakening exists, it will not go to sleep again.

"Now, knowing this and more, the morning after the decisive defeat of the surrounding flotilla with its armament of heavy stones, I caused you to be bound as you are, and every bottle of your brutalizing liquor to be cast into the harbor.

"Then, leaving you and the ship in the care of the trio in blue, in a little boat which I had secured after the conflict, I went ashore alone to report you and your coming aright to my associates in the government of the commonwealth and to open negotiations with them by which you might be saved—and I, for my existence is inseparable from yours—and my beloved country spared as much as possible from the dangers of innovation which the people dreaded from the highest to the lowest in the land.

"By virtue of my official position, I, apart from any association with you, was safe; while I, guilty of the crime of loving you, was a doomed wretch, to be executed as soon as my motherhood should become known to the official censor of my district. Howsoever, I boldly summoned my associates together, and said to them, when they were assembled in our usual place of meeting as follows:

"'Associated Women in the Government of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona: With your official powers delegated to me, I took charge of the next to the last attempt to remove, by fair means or foul, the most marvelous of men, who has entered our harbor in his most marvelous of ships and, in so doing remove a menace to the existence of our isolated country. In the execution of this, our united commission, I failed, and was captured by the stranger and held a prisoner in his big boat until, during the heat of the last disastrous engagement, I regained my freedom and assumed at once all the powers with which I had been invested by you; and in that official capacity I took into consideration a certain treaty or agreement between the most marvelous of men and the Commonwealth of Revi-lona, but declined to be the sole representative of my country in accepting or rejecting it, without laying it before you, for your consideration and final action, by approval or disapproval as it stands, or by amendment and subsequent approval or disapproval. And in attestation of the good faith of the most marvelous of men, and the harmlessness of his mission to our isolated country, I have brought with me from the stores contained in his big boat several articles which I have here in a bundle at my side, not as a present to all of us collectively, as the government of Revi-lona, nor any of us individually, for the most marvelous of men

is too exalted in his motives to offer a bribe, but simply for our inspection and satisfaction and the extinguishment forever of any apprehension as to the end and effect of his coming hither.'

"Here I interrupted my address to exhibit to my associates the following articles and explained their use: First, the marvelous mirror, the mystic fascination of which I, a woman, had felt, and which I was sure my associates as women would feel also; second, the marvelous headdress, with the rainbow in the form of a little flying bird in the front of it amid a cluster of beautiful flowers and fruit; third, the dainty little watch that counts our heart-beats all day long as accurately as all the College of the Wise Men; fourth, the lace-trimmed evening party dress as you call it, of a similar silk to our own, but dyed an iridescent hue unknown to us; fifth—in short, twenty-four articles of female apparel or belongings, in all, that each and all of them might have in turn all and one exclusively in her hands and eyes and heart and be seized with the passion of possession—the better and the sooner to bring about the ratification of the treaty which I had in hand I then produced the treaty which I had prepared; and after getting the opinion from the highest court of the commonwtalth as to the legal points involved, and after a general consideration of the subject matter from as many points of view as the twenty-four articles of dress and toilet in sight of all would permit, it was approved and adopted unanimously.

"The several legal question submitted to the judges related to the liability of the fifteen beautiful women and myself to any violation of the laws of the land while aboard the ship and subject to your unrestrained will and irresistible power.

"With respect to the fifteen beautiful women, the judges held that since they had been sacrificed by the government of Revi-lona, they were now, theoretically, dead, and enrolled among the heroines of the country; and as long as they remained in your company and subject to your command, they would not be amenable to the laws.

"And with respect to myself, the judges held that the instant you made me your prisoner I became dead also in the eyes of the law and remained a corpse until the instant I regained my freedom and assumed the functions and powers of my official station.

"This was not satisfactory to me; for having learned to love you while a prisoner, and feeling that existence apart from you would be intolerable and compel me to violate the laws of my country and suffer preferably the instant pang of death to years of torture, I was in a most distressing perplexity—so very distressing, in fact, that I went before the judges myself. But when I saw before me a number of the insignificant beings whom the official controller of the population had bred as men, I became confused to such an extent with a sense of shame in seeking from them a legal loophole by which I might be exempt from the penalties of loving you to my heart's content in the future, that abashed and mortified, I withdrew without a word.

"I then repaired to my associates in the government for relief; and I was perplexed as sadly as I had been before the judges. I could not confess myself to be what they would consider a monster of immorality and refuse to permit me to come into their presence again; and I could not describe your irresistible charms as a man, lest they should have one and all a woman's natural curiosity to see for herself and come within the influence of your attractions, and possibly one or more of

them supplant me in your fickle affection.

"Happily, then, at this crisis of my distress, one of my associates tapped with her finger-tips on the back of the toilet mirror, saying: 'But there is one thing that I cannot understand, and that is, what in the world a big, ugly man, with one red and one green eye, would want with a mirror like this? Dear me, if I had eyes'—'and the horrible voice he has!' winked another, as she held the ticking watch to her ear. 'Why, I saw one of the boatmen signaling to a groom ashore that when he wished to convey any intelligence, he chucked and cackled like a mogul hen calling a run-away chick! I would not go within earshot of his awful voice for all the wonderful things he may have in his wonderful boat!'

"I saw my opportunity now and availed myself of it. 'It is true, I said to my associates, 'the stranger is as marvelous in his personal appearance and habits as in his weapons of war and possessions, such as you have before you; and in this hour of peril to the commonwealth of Revi-lona, when sacrifices of life are made freely by the patriotic men and women of the country, it is necessary that one of the governing women should sacrifice herself to be the committee of guardian of this marvelous man during his sojourn in the country, to advise him of our laws and proprieties of which he is absolutely ignorant, and interpose herself between him and danger and difficulty of any kind and at any time to insure the safety and well-being of the guest of the commonwealth and preserve the national honor; for which sacrifice the devoted woman not only should be exempt from the operation of the laws of the land from any enforced infraction thereof by reason of her intimacy and constant association with the marvelous monster, but also should be decorated with a distinguished badge of her heroic self-sacrifice for the good of her country—say, a second plume in her headgear or something of the kind.'

"This seemed reasonable to my associates. But when the chairman (literally, the Nose of the Face of the Governing Body) called for volunteers, none responded; and according to the rules and regulations of our government, I, as the suggester of the sacrifice, was appointed and required to make the martyr of myself.

"Now, most marvelous of men, are you satisfied?"

I was astounded, exasperated, humiliated and outraged by this narration; for at one fell swoop I was reduced from the most glorious independence and illimitable irresponsibility to the most despicable subservience and contracted tethering, as a weanling attached to a nurse's apron-string! My marvelousness a mockery, and my magnificent manhood (as I fancied it in my abyssmal degradation) subject for life to the whims and caprices of a wily woman!

"No!" I roared out at the top of my voice. "No! I am not satisfied; and I never shall be! You most hypocritical and treacherous of women, to make a mad dog and a lap dog of me at the same time—to chain me down with one hand and pet and pat me with the other! Out of my sight before I blast you with the breath of my righteous wrath and just denunciation!"

"Then lie there until you have changed your mind," the majestic woman muttered with her voiceless lips, rising and expanding in anger and indignation. "You monster of ingratitude, immorality, selfishness, debauchery and injustice!"

And the offended woman, in an overwhelming tempest of scorn, swept out of the cabin.

CHAPTER XVII.

Two days afterward Nada-nana reappeared as pale as ashes, and bending over my prostrate form kissed my forehead in a paroxysm of the tenderest love; then, weeping as if her heart were broken, she left me without a word.

In the meantime I was undergoing a change of nature, more perhaps from a deprivation of all intoxicating liquors and the reparative powers of my strong and healthy constitution, than from any conscious resolution or wilful determination; and out of the depths of my depravity I recognized the fact that a new man was emerging, with a more exalted idea of life than heretofore, a more clearly defined purpose and a hazy, half-realization of the acme of existence in the absolute subordination of self to the welfare of the society or state in which I lived, or scientifically speaking, the species to which I belonged. And among the circumstances or agents to bring about this change in my nature I recognized the influence of the self-sacrificing dispositions of my shipmates, albeit in a confusion of incomprehensible surroundings externally and newly awakened emotions internally. And finally I became convinced that among these sixteen shipmates there was that possessed a peculiar potency which separated her frem the rest, in spite of this or that special enchantment. This was Nada-nana, the two-plumed governess, the first to fascinate me. And while I could not define the effect which her presence had upon me, I felt it; and I had a dreamy suspicion that the feeling was a foundation in fact for the Castle in Spain which I had constructed in my imagination in the exuberance of my youthful architectural powers.

At length my attendants released my legs from bondage to a degree that I could hobble about a little and conducted me to the deck.

Here I found the governess in a formal attitude awaiting me; and bowing to her as gracefully and smiling as pleasantly as I coudd under the circumstances, I begged to be informed of the object of the interview.

"I have sent for you," the governess muttered with her voiceless lips and as coldly as an automaton, "that you may see for yourself and be convinced that the time has come for you to determine on a course of action which will be acceptable to to others as well as yourself.

"In the first place, you have told me that in the great country from which you have come the symbol of supremacy between man and woman is the peculiar garment with which you encase the lower part of your body and your legs, and which you call variously your breeches or pantaloons, but especially the latter, which, you say, signifies literally the Flag of the Lion, or otherwise the Flag of the King of Beasts. Now, accepting this to be true, in order that you may understaand fully the relationship that subsists between us now, I have donned one of these significant garments belonging to you and bid you behold in me your master. Mistress! King! Queen! Or what you will, that conveys in your language the idea of a superior to direct and control to save or to slay at will."

At this exhibition I laughed outright and encouraged by the ludicrousness of the otherwise serious affair to think that I would be released after a series of similar farcical performances, I cried out jocularly: "Go on with the circus, my dears!"

"In the second place, you have found a source of infinite amusement in putting on the naked bodies of the women before and around you the familiar garments which are worn by the women of your country. It is our turn now to be amused by putting on you the garments which are worn by the men of our country—a suit which has been made especially for you of the finest silk and of the color worn only by the highest class of our people, blue. In doing so, however, our modesty and our regard for the feelings of others will not permit us to expose your person with the exception of your feet."

Upon this my shoes and stockings were removed and a shapely pair of sandals fitted to my feet. Then, while standing erect, the under of the two poncho-like garments was put on me by passing my head through the opening in the middle and letting the halves of the silken web fall fore and aft over my breast and back respectively to my ankles. Next the second of the similar garments was adjusted crosswise, but without putting my pinioned arms through the arm-holes. This was followed by placing an oblong piece of matting on my head and binding it fast with a ribbon under the chin; and I was dressed from top to toe.

I affected to be as proud as a peacock in my Revi-lonanian robes; and amid a shower of complimentary adjectives, expressed in a variety of ways, "grand, stately, superb, majestic," and the like, I hobbled about on the deck, bowing in turn to all the beautiful women who seemed to be perfectly happy—all with the exception of the governess, who, while closely and keenly observant of all my actions and expressions, was pale and serenely severe.

I was distressed at this and a little fearful of its significance; but having assumed a mirthful mask for the occasion, I concluded to wear it to the last, or as long as I could.

At length the headgear, the blue gown and the sandals were removed, and at the command of the governess the medicine chest was brought on deck.

"Now, in the third place," continued the governess, addressing me with great formality, "since you found a special delight in administering to each of us a dose of castor oil when we were in your power and ignorant of the nauseous taste and sickening effects of the mysterious medicine, it is nothing more than fair and just that now that we have you in our power we should administer to you a dose of the same cathartic—or, rather, one dose a-piece, one after the other, making sixteen doses in all."

At this, in despite of my determination to accept the situation with a merry heart, I began to distort my countenance into the most horrible grimaces, as if I had the nauseous drug in my mouth, and wince and writhe; and with the most pitiful of looks and persuasive of pleadings, I besought the majestic woman to have mercy on me.

But without affecting her in the least; for, as severely as before, she continued, "and since you have made yourself merry in the extreme in torturing us while we were at your mercy, with poisonous quills in various parts of the body, causing painful and ugly sores on all of us, and from the effects of which we all are suffering, it is but just

and fair that we should make ourselves merry in the selfsame manner now that you are helpless at our feet. We shall begin with the castor oil—sixteen doses, one after the other. Uncork the bottle, and when you hold it to his lips, say to him as he did to you, with a smile of deceit to unsuspecting innocence and affection, 'Now, dearie, if you love me, prove it by swallowing a mouthful of this with a smile!'"

At this my blood ran cold and I groaned aloud, for I felt that I deserved the punishment a thousand times over for the cruel and brutal advantage which I had taken in the period of my omnipotence over the beautiful and affectionate women in my power.

And with my overwhelming sense of guilt—my manhood and all the superior qualities with which I had been endowed so lavishly by nature, a glaringly shameful and disgraceful sham before my eyes—I became so weak that I certainly would have sunk to the deck had I not been supported by the beautiful woman who had the open-mouthed bottle of oil in one hand, and poor, pitiful, miserable me in the other.

"Stop, now," commanded the governess as the bottle was presented to my lips. "And from the removal of the untasted bottle from his lips, let the most marvelous of men, with his mysterious resources of unimaginable power, learn that from the highest to the lowest of the people of Revi-lona, there is neither man nor woman so disregardful of the duties which as civilized social beings we owe to one another, as to take a selfish pleasure or a revengeful gratification by inflicting pain on any in their power, and especially one as feeble to resist and resent as an infant."

Every word of this went to my heart; for with their utterance I realized that the majestic woman before me, whom I should have loved truly and treated with the profoundest respect for her inestimable goodness of head and heart, was going farther and farther away from one so utterly unworthy of her as myself.

"Now," resumed the commanding governess, "bring the gun and ammunition of the most marvelous of men and place them before him that he may see them."

This was done.

"Now, cast them overboard that the most marvelous of men may see and be satisfied that in so far as his mysterious weapon of war gave him an advantage over the men of Revi-lona he is reduced to their level."

I made an effort to prevent the destruction of what I relied on as my right arm, in all my imaginary encounters with the Revi-lonanians in the future, but without avail; and my heart sank to a lower notch than ever before as I heard the plunge of the weapon and store of cartridges in the sea.

"Now," resumed the governess, "bring the matches of the most marvelous of men and place them on the deck before him that he may see them."

This was done.

"Now cast them overboard that the most marvelous of men may see and be satisfied that in so far as the possession of this mysterious means of producing fire at will gave him an advantage over the men of Revi-lona he is reduced to their level."

And without so little as a sigh of regret in my utter helplessness and hopelessness, I saw the ship's store of matches thrown into the sea—my left hand gone with my right.

"Now," continued the governess, "since the most marvelous of men has been deprived of his artificial powers and reduced to his natural, whatsoever they may be in mind and body and that mysterious appenage of every individual, character, the time has come for him to learn the provisions of the treaty which has been proposed in his behalf; and to decide whether or not he will accept them, knowing from them his fate in the future in case of acceptance, and knowing from his helplessness in the hands of only sixteen of the women of Revi-lona his fate in the future in case of refusal—in the hands of the thousands of men who have been seeking his death in every way known to them, since his coming into their harbor in his most marvelous of boats."

"Proceed," I meekly muttertd, "most considerate and merciful of women."

A curious silken fabric of many colors, like a narrow towel with a long fringe at one end, was brought to the governess, who, laying it over her left arm, exhibited it to me, pointing out with the forefinger of her right hand a myriad of little knots in the texture of the web, woof of the woven fabric, which I had recognized at a glance as the mode of writing or recording which had been employed. The long fringe at the end, however, was an unsolvable puzzle to me until I read the first words of the peculiar instrument, "this knot has been tied," etc., when I inferred, and correctly, as I afterward learned, that the parties to the agreement tied the knot in the presence of witnesses as parties to an agreement among us affix their signatures and seals to the written memorandum or record of the transaction.

At length, the woven document having been examined to the satisfaction of my curosity, the governess read as follows:

"This knot has been tied by—by the way, most marvelous of men, if you will be good enough to give me the name by which you have been tattooed and registered officially in your native country and will have it knotted correctly in the space which has been left for it."

"Anson Oliver. I was christened or baptized, or simply named, as we term it in my country."

"It shall be inserted accordingly."

Then, holding the web before her, the governess resumed the reading of the curious collection of knots, beginning as before:

"This knot has been tied by Anson Oliver, party of the white thread, and the people of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona, by, through and with the authority and sanction of the representatives, the Twenty-five Governing Women, united for the execution of this particular act in one of their number, Nada-nana, as she has been tattooed and registered officially, the party of the blue thread, in the great Ceremonial Basin of the City of Maro, on the 242nd day of the 2379th year from the felling of the fragment of an unknown world from the sky, and in the presence of the recorder of the read, Toba-riba, as she has been tattooed and registered officially, to the end that the woven document of the web of which the knot is formed may be preserved in the archives of the commonwealth that all the details of the transaction may be kept intact and independent of the variable and transitory memory of the constantly coming and going generations of mankind.

"Purple band (or preamble)—For and in consideration of the mutual exchanges hereinafter specifically set forth, as pledges of everlasting peace between the aforesaid party of the white thread and the party

of the blue thread, it is agreed by and between the aforesaid party of the white thread and the party of the blue thread, as follows, to wit:—

"Red band (or article first)—The party of the white thread, during the term of his natural life, shall be the honored guest of the commonwealth of Revi-lona, and be exempt from the operation of all the laws of the land except those pertaining to the morals and the duties of the people and the authority and the integrity of the commonwealth; and that the observation of the legal obligations hereby excepted from the general code may be attended with a minimum of inconvenience to the party of the white thread and a maximum of security to the party of the blue thread, the party of the white thread shall be under the watchful eyes and within the directing and restraining hand of one of the Twenty-five Governing Women, the aforesaid Nada-nana, and who in recognition of her self-sacrificing devotion to the welfare of her country, shall wear as a distinguishing badge of honor, three plumes in her bonnet of as many colors, as she may select, namely, red, white and blue, in the expression of her admiration of the great country on the other side of the earth from which the party of the white thread has come, and of which a flag combining these three colors is a national symbol which is respected in every part of the civilized world."

"There, there! That will do," I exclaimed, interrupting the governess. "As long as I am to be under the guidance and care of the noble woman who has treated me today so magnanimously—baugh! faugh! the very smell of the castor oil has left a nauseating taste of the medicine in my mouth!—I am satisfied. All the other provisions of the treaty are secondary to this, and may be set aside for the present. In fine, oh, noblest of women, you have overwhelmed me with favors, infinitely beyond my desserts; and I shall live from this moment only to prove that I am worthy of your consideration."

"Then retire at once to your cabin, and remain in bondage until noon tomorrow, when all the arrangements shall have been made for the tying of this significant knot as a public ceremony of great importance to the people of Revi-lona, and when you, clad in the robes which have been provided for you and fitted on you today shall be conducted by me to the place assigned for the official act. Go!"

"Without a kiss? Oh, no, no, no! That will never do! An agreement between a man and woman that is not sealed with a kiss is not worth the web into which it has been woven."

"Consider the sacredness of this treaty-cloth as you will I shall never kiss you again till you have learned to respect the feelings of those beneath you or in your power as you affect to regard the sensibilities of those above you or beyond your reach—never, until you have established a character in keeping with your appearance, by endurance for the sake of others, by devotion to the duties imposed upon you by a complex society, and by deeds of kindness and charity beyond the powers of men who have been favored less by nature than you—never, until you have subjugated the savage within you and converted him into a civilized Revi-lonanian!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Sometime in the night following this well-deserved excoriation, while I was tumbling and tossing on my bunk, by turns regarding the governess as the most merciful of women and the most tyrannical, and then debating in my mind whether or not the majestic woman ever did or could or would love me, and whether or not I ever did or could or would love a woman as truly and as well as a man worthy of the name of man should, I somehow loosened the bandages around my arms; and in a few minutes I was standing on my feet without a restraining cord of any kind around me, trying my limbs in various attitudes, inhaling and exhaling the atmosphere of my cabin prison as if it were the air of freedom on a mountain height, and indulging in a variety of fanciful schemes of vengeance and retaliation, not only on the governess and the fifteen beautiful women, but also on all the people of Revi-lona, to the last women of the confounded petticoated country.

Upon further consideration, however, recollecting that I had been deprived of my practically omnipotent weapons, I gradually limited the operation of my vengeance to the sixteen beautiful women on the ship, whom I could throttle, if necessary, in order to make them acknowledge for all time to come my indisputable supremacy in everything.

At this juncture, while fingering in my rifled pockets for a taste of tobacco, which I craved incessantly, I found two matches in one of my vest pockets; and realizing that I had regained one of my weapons, I proceeded to go on deck and take complete possession of the ship, myself and the situation, as I saw fit under the present change of circumstances.

I tried the cabin door; and to my surprise I found it unlocked and nobody on guard on the outside. Then, with a stealthiness little in keeping with my chaotic intentions of independent action, I crept as silently as I could to the deck and skulked in the darkness to the bow. There, stumbling on the brass cannon, and recollecting that it was loaded almost to the muzzle, I concluded to fire it, and in the awful roar and reverberation which it would make, inform the governess and the people of Revi-lona that I was still the most marvelous of men with an inconceivable number of unimaginable resources of infinite power at my command. I got out one of the matches and went no further; for happily I realized that while I might deceive the governess and the people of Revi-lona by the discharge of the cannon, it would be but for a short time, and that during the brief period I could not deceive myself. I was at the end of my tether of intimidation, intolerance and antagonism; and the discharge of the gun would serve to accentuate the fact and nothing more.

The perspiration started from every pore in my body; and as I stood in the sickening suspense, with the match in my hand, I felt the touch of a communicating finger on my shoulder tapping out the

words: "You have been put to the test of resolution for only a night and found wanting, to my unutttrable disappointment and sorrow."

Taking her hand gently in mine, I replied, "Then you purposely loosened my cords, left my door unlocked and unguarded and the matches in my pocket to try me?"

"I have, in the hope of a heart-wrung woman to find you true, not false, at this critical moment."

"Where are the fifteen beautiful women, my attendants?"

"Out of danger, ashore."

"Are you alone?"

"I am alone with you aboard this ship, but surrounded with a thousand or more of my countrymen awaiting even now with beating hearts the signal which has been agreed on."

"What is it?"

"The moment the moon has risen above the mountain tonight, the pent-up floods of the poisonous fluid from the old volcano, of which I have told you, will be poured into the harbor at different points, unless——"

"Well, out with it!"

"Unless between the appearance of the tips of the horns of the moon I shall have signaled that all is well in the manner known only to the gatekeeper and myself."

"Well, all is well, you may report"

"I will not lie. You should be bound in your cabin at this moment, not here with a match in your hand to do I know not what. You should be true to your word, not false. You should be proving yourself worthy of the confidence and trust of the people of Revi-lona, who propose to make you their honored guest, not unworthy. And now, before the fatal moment shall have passed and father and mother and unborn babe shall be a memory of the past for the living to shudder at for ages, go back to your bonds in your cabin—go, I beseech you—go, I implore you—go, on my knees I supplicate you, if not for the sake of the wretched mother of her innocent unborn babe!"

I looked toward the mountain where the light of the rising moon was silvering the crest, and feeling that the woman who had yielded to me once would yield again, especially in the emergency which she had indicated, as I caught a glimmer of the limb of the moon, I said to her, "You remember the effect of the first kiss of love which I gave you?"

"I do and well."

"Then kiss me as fervently as I kissed you, and as you yielded to me, so will I yield to you."

"I will not. I yielded to you then for the double reason that I was your prisoner and that I was fascinated with a form of majestic manliness and intoxicated with the first sip of affection for untold generations; but now I am free, and having learned the difference between a brave man and a bully, I dare to do my duty in the very jaws of death. Go, I command you! You would-be murderer of a mother and her unborn babe to gratify for an instant your inordinate pride, your world-subordinating vanity and your inexsuperable egotism! Go, on your belly, go, wriggling worm that you are in the guise of a mighty man!"

And as I slunk away from the heroic woman I saw her move to the side of the vessel and heard her tap a signal in unintelligible terms to me, but which was undoubtedly the equivalent of "All's well," from the fact that the pent-up floods were not released and that I live to tell the tale.

On returning to my cabin I readjusted the bands about my limbs as well as I could; and, figuratively speaking, I spent the remainder of the night in kicking myself from truck to keelson for the stupendous folly which I had committed in widening the breach between the majestic governess and myself into a seemingly impassable chasm; and in meditating between my kickings on the difference between winning the love of a woman and gaining and maintaining her good opinion, or, in other words, in exciting her animal passions and in realizing her manly ideal, mentally and morally, as well as physically.

CHAPTER XIX.

At noon the following day, cleanly shaven and dressed from top to toe in my Revi-lonanian raiment, but with my hands bound behind my back, and a hood over my eyes, I was conducted by two of my beautiful attendants from my cabin to the deck, and thence to the platform of the barge—heretofore described—which was in waiting beside the bow of the ship. And after the barge had been shoved a cable's length from the vessel my arms were unbound and the hood removed from my eyes; and on looking toward the vessel I saw that the deck was in the possession of a hundred men or more watching me in silence. The governess and the people of the strange country evidently would not run any more risk with me than was absolutely necessary, fearing that I still might have a mysterious power about me which they could divine no more than my fowling-piece and fire.

And looking around me, I found along with me on the barge all the fifteen beautiful women in new gowns and radiant with joy at their deliverance from their inconvenient quarters in the old whaling vessel and the prospect of serving a life-long term of subjection to me amid the beauties and comforts of their native land; and in their midst the majestic governess, Nada-nana, in a new gown also, and with three beautiful plumes in her bonnet, red, white and blue, respectively, in color; her face a little flushed, her eyes gleaming, her breast heaving as if in a subdued exultation of victory, while her body trembled perceptibly, as if in terror of the unknown consequences of a defeat. She greeted me, however, with a smile, saying with the movement of her lovely lips, "Welcome, welcome, honored guest of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona! I greet you in behalf of all the people of our happy country, rejoicing today that an end has come to the horrors of war!"

"It is the proudest moment of my life to receive your gracious tender of the hospitality of Revi-lona, and I thank you heartily for it with my best wishes for the welfare of your happy country and yourself. Further, in behalf of the people of the country from which I have come (a most unworthy representative in many ways, I am free to confess), I thank you for the graceful compliment which you have paid them in recognizing the symbol of their sovereignty as a nation among the nations of the earth, in the three-colored plumes in your bonnet."

On reaching the shore I found awaiting us two grooms holding by their halters two of the gigantic birds of burden, or mogas, of which I have spoken already; and in my admiration of them, towering above me like overgrown feathered giraffes, I failed to notice that the gaping rabble which I had expected to see on landing was not to be seen at

all—the two grooms and the score or so of boatmen who had shoved the barge before them being the only persons in sight, besides the seventeen of us from the ship.

I essayed to mount the larger of the two mogas, as I was directed by Nada-nana; but the monstrous feathered biped becoming frantic at the sight of me—or my proportions, possibly—as I approached, I found it impossible to do so without sacrificing the dignity which I had assumed with the noble gown of Revi-lona.

Meeting the unlooked for fright of the big bird with complacency, the three-plumed governess ordered the grooms to take aside their feathered chargers, and invited me to walk by her side—on her right: and followed thus by the fifteen beautiful women, in trios, taking precedence inversely to their rank, or the red before the orange and so on, we proceeded up the sloping wharf to the central avenue of the city.

As we did so, I felt a peculiar sensation, like a feeble thrill of pleasure running through my body, as my feet alternately came in contact with the ground. This, I fancied, was caused by my making and breaking with my steps the circuit between my body and the great magnetic earth—and this in spite of my nonconductor sandals of matting and silk; which, however, had become a little wet on getting out of the barge on the splashed wharf, and had been rendered in a measure conductive, and that I felt the sensation was owing to the fact that I had been aboard the ship for so many weeks that I had become especially sensitive to the mysterious modes of force which in one way or another are passing constantly between the earth and its earthy inhabitants. At any rate, I began to feel so happy and then so light, elastic and airy that I certainly would have shouted aloud and jumped and frolicked about like a bullock in play in the barnyard after a long confinement in the stall, had it not been for the severely stately decorum of the three-plumed governess at my side; the formal fifteen coming behand and the impressive solemnity of the silence and strangeness of my new environment.

Then, curiously, I thought of the figure which the three-plumed governess and myself in my flowing robes would cut in a cake-walk in my native state; and I could not refrain from smiling, then chuckling and finally laughing outright.

This breach of decorum promptly met the rebuking frown of Nada-nana; and blushing as I realized that I was a big overgrown baby or booby, in the care of a governess or nurse, I wanted to put my hands in my pockets or do some other boyish act in the expression of my discomfiture, before I recovered my equanimity in the formal procession—of international importance, seemingly, to the three-plumed governess.

At length, having traversed the wharf and paraded the principal avenue for a hundred yards or more—the wharf and the street covered with a marble-like cement and the houses on each side of the way, from one to three stories in height, composed of the same material, with portieres of silk and matting in the doorways instead of doors, and curtains of the same materials in the windows in lieu of glass, as I noticed casually as I walked along—we turned to the right, and a few seconds after we stood on the first of a surprising series of concentric steps of the marble-white substance forming a vast colossaeum below the level of the streets of the surrounding city; and at once I recognized in it the great Ceremonial Basin mentioned in the treaty-web.

I saw also at a glance that ten or fifteen thousand men and women

were seated on these concentric steps, in five great fan-shaped divisions, extending from the level circular bottom of the subterranean colosseum to the brim, with convenient passage-ways running up and down in the midst of the several great divisions. From the colors of the dresses worn by the vast assembly, I recognized the five classes into which the people of Revi-lona were divided, or, as I learned afterward, have been bred for centuries in conformity with a theory that they represent in a measure five corresponding divisions or races among mankind.

The vast concourse of people was waiting us in breathless expectation; and when we appeared, I heard a general exhalation like a gentle autumn breeze in the tree-tops of a valley and then a rustle of ten thousand silken garments, like that of a myriad of fallen leaves gathered up and swept along by the wind. Then came a cessation of all sound and movement; and the three-plumed governess and I—parting with my fifteen beautiful attendants at the brim—descended the long flight of steps before us to the bottom.

Obliged to regard my footsteps lest I should fall, I refrained from glancing around me until I had reached the central level. There finding myself free to look around me, I seemed to be at the lowest depth of a vast crater, regularly straited from the bottom to the top, and dotted with innumerable little statues or effigies of men and women in differently colored garments. Soon, however, regarding the near more especially than the far, I found that I was facing the twenty-four associates of Nada-nana in the government of the strange country, and that, while two of them were advanced in years, they were all women of large size and noble appearance and approximately as beautiful as Nada-nana—one of them in particular, however, surpassing the three-plumed governess in physical charms, being a most ravishingly enchanting woman, voluptuous to the verge of wantonness, and at the same time as cold and irresponsive as a painted canvas.

I saw, too, that the eyes of the thousands around me were riveted on me—especially those of the women nearest me—and still especially those of the supereminently beautiful being directly in front of me; and swelling with pride, I said to myself exulting, supernos et sidera testor! I am the happiest man that ever stood on the planet!

Suddenly, however I was recalled from the inner world to the outer, by observing a dainty little old man (powdered and painted, etc., like the members of the College of the Wise Men, already described), arise from one of the lowest benches and walk in a dignified manner to a little table of cane or rattan that stood at the left of Nada-nana. Here, stopping, he took up from the table the towel-like treaty-web, and hanging it over his left arm, held it before his eyes; then taking in his right hand a peculiar drumstick or baton that lay on the table beside a kind of drum or tamborine about twenty inches in diameter, he began to read the document to the vast assembly by beating out the words in a rapid succession of significant rubby-dub-dubs.

In this performance, of course, I should have been interested intensely; but I was not—I was fascinated too much by the gaze of the transcendent glory in the form of a woman before me, to heed a word of the agreement beyond the preamble.

At length the cessation of the monotonous thumping and rumbling of the drum -beating startled me; and when the treaty-web was presented to Nada-nana and myself, I fell under the influence of my electric

governess at once, and joined with her in tying the significant treaty-knot in a faultlessly formal manner.

That most important part of the ceremony over, amid a crash of many musical instruments in various parts of the subterranean colosseum, I was conducted by Nada-nana to the seats which had been reserved for us; and to my chagrin, I found they were where I could not see the cynosure of the magnificent ceremony to me, the incomparable among all the wonderfully beautiful women of Revi-lona whom I had seen up to the thrilling moment in which I felt the first shock of her charms.

Then, following the music, came a number of congratulatory speeches from as many little fantastic fops, with big heads and intelligent faces in spite of their disfigurement with parti-colored curls and beard, powder, paint, patches and ear-pendants; several of them decorated with the distinguishing badge of the Fish of prehistoric significance; and two of them wearing on their noses a curiously shaped constrictor of the nostrils, somewhat like the clothes-pin in common use in Pennsylvania. This, as I afterward learned, to close their exceedingly sensitive organs of smell to any odor that might arise from the multitude in the subterranean colisseum and disturb for an instant their ceremonial contemplation. In turn, they rose from their seats and went to the little table, and rattled out their remarks in a remarkably precise and formal manner; and what they said evinced a sea of thought, in width and depth, most marvelously at variance with the little grotesque guys in their dotlet of a country on the map of the world.

At last the turn came to me; and my brain sharing the subdued excitement of my body—and happily the fascinating beauty not being in my sight to disturb my ceremonial contemplation—I arose and with a pompous strut rather than a stately stride, went to the little table, took up the drumstick with the deliberation of my predecessors, and hammered out the following sentiments in the language of the Revi-lora-niasn which I had learned from Nada-nana and my fifteen beautiful attendants sufficiently to enable me to express myself intelligently, if not fluently and correctly:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, People of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona:—Your wise men are aware that every living thing on the earth is a certain embodiment of its surroundings; and as the different parts of earth differ in every way from one another, the living things which, as I have said, are the embodiments of their surroundings, differ from one another in every way. When, accordingly, your wise men see two plants that vary or two birds or two men, they measure from their differences the distance between their several places of birth and growth—the greater the difference the greater the distance in time and space; and when they saw the difference between my big and complex boat in the harbor and their little and simple boats, as well as the difference between my means of waging war and yours, and the difference between my personal appearance, and that of your men, they said at once and truly, this boat and this man, to differ so much from our boats and men, must have come from a very great distance—possibly, the other side of the earth. In fine, that is the fact; while you embody the surroundings of the southern pole of the planet, I embody the environment of the northern hemisphere, or relatively to you, the north pole. It is not to be wondered at, then, that when the poles of the earth sud-

dealy came together, there should be a crash, or the strife of elements embodied in our several persons, or, in other words, war.

"Now, further, your wise men are aware that after every collision of the elements there is a cessation of motion for a longer or shorter time. This, in human affairs—the absolute counterpart of the natural phenomenon—is a period of peace, in which that part of mankind involved at once begins a new life as it were; repairing the damage done in the conflict, healing the wounds, establishing order and growing from day to day into something necessarily different from anything ever seen before, but not necessarily something worse. On the contrary, presumably something better, higher and nobler in the infinite divergence of development from change to change.

"However, be this imperfect philosophic formulation as it may, henceforth, to the best of my ability, I will endeavor to make amends for the misery of the past by increasing the happiness of the future and repay in some measure at least the obligation I am under to the magnanimous people of Revi-lona who have made me their honored guest."

I was about to utter another sentiment when above the reverberation of the rumbling of the drum, I heard a general hissing from every one of the thousands surrounding me; and on looking up and around in a stupefaction of amazement and humiliation I saw that every one of the mighty multitude was indulging not only in hissing, but also with the thumb of the right hand held under the tip of the nose, in vibrating rapidly the upturned fingers between the eyes!

My anger rose in an instant, and turning to the three-plumed governess, I demanded: "What is the meaning of this? Do they intend to mock me and jeer at me or taunt me like a bull at a baiting?" And my anger still rising till I became furious, I turned from Nada-nana before she had time to reply and smashed the drum and table into fragments at my feet; and then looking savagely around at the hissing and finger-twiddling multitude, and expanding my chest and clenching my fist, I roared out at the top of my voice: "You may kill me if you will, but by the eternal, you shall not insult me without a defiance! Come one, come all! Ye pusillanimous, petticoated puerilities!"

The sight of my wrath and the sound of my voice, so unexpected, so shocking and so alarming to the timid, startled everybody. The hissing and finger-twiddling ceased. And nothing, perhaps, saved the thousands from a general panic and flight, but the action of Nada-nana at my side, standing perfectly motionless till I had concluded my verbal defiance, which, happily uttered in my own language, was an unintelligible barking of a wild beast to all.

Then, laying her hand on my shoulder, she pricked the bubble of my bravado in an instant by saying to me, "These are our modes of approving and applauding in public. You are making a fool of yourself. Sit down, or you will sink in shame and mortification when you realize what you have done in your uncontrollable rage. Sit down I command you!"

I did, of course, at the electrifying mandate of my governess, but sullenly, and as I stalked to my seat, I glanced at the peerless beauty among the governing women, and somehow—there was some mysterious communication between us—I felt that she sympathized with me in my subjection to the three-plumed governess

In a very complacent manner then Nada-nana with the movements

of her arms, gracefully informed the multitude that in my ignorance of the manners and customs of the country I had misconstrued their several modes of approving and applauding into mockery and insult, as they are regarded in his native country. His outburst of uncontrollable passion, accordingly, was natural and should be forgotten by all; or, if remembered, regarded as a happy illustration of the distance between the poles of the earth and made manifest in the different significations given the same sound and sign in the country from which our honored guest has come, and our beloved Revi-lona.'

This proved to be a happy way in which to consider the occurrence, and amid a general rustle of silk, the vast throng settled into acquiescence and silence. The several bands played; then in turn and together; and in the most precise order, beginning with the upper tier and ending with the lowest, the thousands rose from their seats and took their departure from the great Ceremonial Basin.

The Twenty-five Governing Women were the last to ascend the steps; and I was among them, the severe Nada-nana on my left and the sympathetic prodigy of perfection on my right, thrilling me through and through with her mere presence.

CHAPTER XX.

At the brim of the grand Ceremonial Basin or subterranean Coliseum, or underground amphitheater, or what you will, I turned to survey in admiration the stupendous structure, so simple, so substantial, so safe and so admirably adapted in every way for the uses of a vast assembly, that I marveled the like of it was not to be found elsewhere on the globe. It was roofless, it is true; and it could be used only in fair weather; but in many countries, fair weather generally prevails and roofless structures are in vogue. I saw only one objection to it, and that was the difficulty of cleansing the vast crater; but this objection vanished the instant I noted a number of men approach the brim from several directions, trailing lines of hose; and after one of their number had descended to the bottom and opened the gate of a sewer leading to the sea, they were able to wash the whole from top to bottom in a few minutes.

My curiosity satisfied with respect to the cleansing of the novel structure—the only public hall on the globe, perhaps, where the door equaled the circumference of the building and was as unobstructed as the bounds of a prairie city—I was conducted to the house which had been appropriated by the government to my use, and found it to be a building with many extraordinary—if not marvelous—characteristics.

The first of these it shared with all the structures of Revi-lona, as I was informed, in as much as the material of which it was composed was a product of one of the geysers or hot springs, on the confines of the country, a kind of paste which upon exposure to the atmosphere became as hard and durable as the firmest rock, being, in fact, a kind of stone so closely allied in its chemical constituents and characteristics as to be indistinguishable from our precious gem, the opal.

The second of the characteristics of my opal palace, likewise, it shared with all the structures of Revi-lona, in as much as the framework to which the sinter-paste was applied was a kind of wickerwork

composed of interwoven canes and willows and other suitable vegetable products of the country. The wickerwork and the paste combined making the structures come under the architectural head of wattle-and-daub and allying them with primitive buildings found in divers parts of the world. The familiar lath-and-plaster in Pennsylvania being a partial use of the method in the construction of houses.

So the third of the characteristics of my new abode, it shared with all the structures of Revi-lona, in as much as the walls annually, on the coming of the darkness of the long polar winter, were painted with the peculiar product of another of the geysers of the country, which made them luminous to a surprising degree for several months without renewal. This peculiar product evidently contained a considerable proportion of phosphorus or radium, in a happy combination with other mineral elements by which its oxidation in the atmosphere was rendered slow and equable. Happily also the product was innocuous. I may say, too, here, a little in advance of my travels through and about the isolated oasis of Revi-lona in a vast volcanic wilderness, that the general diffusion of the phosphorescent or radial light along all the highways and byways of the country, on all the buildings, on the walls of the circular harbor, on the stupendous arch across the mountain chasm, on the colossal tower of the dead and other structures which I have not mentioned yet, made the winter months practically as convenient for indoor and outdoor labor and travel as the summer, but, of course, not so agreeable. Happily, too, it prevented the human mind from being affected injuriously by the night of six long months' duration, and subdued the fitful flame of the aurora australis to a barely noticeable phenomenon in general.

So, the fourth of the characteristics of my polar home it shared with all the dwellings of the country. In as much as the sewage system with which it was connected with the common one of the land and the lavish and elaborate supply of hot and cold water in sinter pipes, with flexible silk-and-rubber cut-offs in lieu of faucets, was to be found in the houses of the lowest classes as well as the highest.

The fifth of the characteristics of my Revi-lonanian residence, however, was peculiar, for it had been constructed for the accommodation of the Twenty-five Governing Women, and in size and shape it was made to fill a certain space between other buildings on one side and behind and two avenues on the other side and in front. It contained accordingly, an antechamber common to all, and twenty-five rooms for the special accommodation of the Twenty-five Governing Women, with seven smaller private apartments. The antechamber extended along the front of the building, having a door in the middle, several windows on each side of the door, a vaulted ceiling and roof combined and a number of benches, tables and chairs around and about of the same material and as immovable as the walls—a most artistic oblong room, some ninety by sixty feet in size, with a most agreeable combination of curves in the shapes of the doors and windows, the ceiling, the furniture and the elaborate ornamentation of all, to say nothing of the precious material of which it was composed, the marvelous means and manner of its illumination and the wonderful silken webs with which the windows and doors were draped, the cloths on the tables, the cushions on the benches and chairs, the mats and rugs on the floor and the grand vases, fully six feet high, symmetric, elaborately ornamented in alto relievo and filled with artificial flowering plants of divers colors in the corners.

From this magnificent chamber a doorway opposite that in the front of the building led to the twenty-five individual compartments. These were all of the same size and substantially identical in their decoration, furniture and appointments; and they were arranged on the three sides of an oblong open court or patio, nine on the right and left of an entering visitor and seven facing him on the opposite side of the court, with the several smaller private apartments in the farther corners.

Around this court there was a covered way leading to all the last mentioned rooms—a promenade and a colonnade or peristyle of the most exquisite architectural beauty and workmanship, infinitely surpassing the Court of the Lions of the Alhambra and the marble palaces of the Moghuls of India, if I may judge from the photographs of these buildings which I have seen. Then came around the court or patio proper a border of vegetation containing a number of the plants of Revi-lona which in their natural growth and coloring lent an additional beauty and grace, if that indeed were possible, to the pre-eminently beautiful and graceful enclosure. Among these plants I recognized a kind of plantin (or banana, as the word has come into use in America through the Spanish and Portuguese), several varieties of tree-fern, a kind of calamus or cattail, a monstrous rush, a kind of papyrus with several gigantic lichens and mosses and a kind of vine with gourd-like fruit of the richest pumpkin yellow.

Within this bower-band of semi-tropic luxuriance, another promenade of opal; and occupying the middle of the oblong court or patio, a tank of seemingly liquid sunshine, but in reality a tank of water remarkably clear in itself and transmitting the luminosity of the phosphorescent bottom and sides of the great basin, some fifty by thirty feet in its length and breadth by ten in depth.

And within this tank of liquid sunshine a number of seemingly fantastic butterflies, flitting hither and thither in the most extraordinary of aerial evolutions, but in reality a number of fish of marvelous shape and hue swimming about. A kind of ribbon fish one, a yard or more in length; a gaudily banded sunfish another; and a phosphorescent eel, a third, moving in the water like a streaming ribbon of light in the wind.

And among these fantastic water butterflies—the most beautiful sight of all reserved for the last in this incomplete description—the fifteen beautiful women of my household swimming and diving with the ease and grace of as many mermaids and happily without any scaly or tally termination to mar their perfect womanly forms—with nothing, in fact, to approximate an imperfection of any kind in their lambient loveliness in the liquid light, save here or there on different parts of the body of one and all a circumscribed area of inflammation, the result of vaccination.

CHAPTER XXI.

"This is all very wonderful and beautiful to me," I said to the three-plumed governess at my side, "especially these finless and scaleless fish in my delighted sight. The great antechamber will serve most admirably for the reception of the distinguished people of Revi-lona who will honor me with a call instead of a card; the rooms which you have designated as the sleeping apartments of the honored guest of the commonwealth, his enchanting governess and his fifteen beautiful attendants, are suited in every way for their occupation and accommodation; this interior patch of the South Pole forest is a great relief to an ice-and-water, a weary eye (to model my phraseology after that of the Swan of Avon); and this fascinating fish pond is an aqueous Eden, the like of which has never been imagined before, except, perhaps, in the dreams of the old ichthyologic bachelor of the Smithsonian Institution; but the honored guest of the commonwealth cannot live alone on the beauty of form and the harmony of color. Where are the pantry, the kitchen and the dining-room of this otherwise complete and satisfactory Revi-lonanian residence? The walk I have had today on solid ground has sharpened my appetite and increased the capacity of my stomach to such an extent that I think I could eat one at least of your big birds of burden, if properly stewed, grilled or fried—I would not be particular as to the cooking and seasoning, so be it it were put before me."

"I, too, am very hungry; for in the excitement I have been for several days I have eaten very little, and now that we have left the ship I trust forever, I trust also that I may be permitted to say with propriety, that I never relished the provisions aboard, the biscuits and the old horse and the like, and the delicacies in the concoction of which you took so much pride, your dough-jahovahs and menavillins and the like. But no matter now. Come, the finless fish can get out of the pond without your assistance; come, and I will take you to the refectory of the Twenty-five Governing Women, where a seat has been added for the accommodation of the honored guest of the commonwealth."

The shadows of night had gathered over and around the City of Maro several hours before we sat out for supper, but in the diffused light from the phosphorescent walls around me I was oblivious of the fact; and even after we had passed the threshold of the house and entered the street, had it not been for a sight of the stars overhead, I scarcely would have imagined the time of day later than the dusk of evening—so luminous being the avenue and the walls of the houses on each side.

As we walked along Nada-nana informed me that there was not a house in the country that was a complete dwelling place or home to the inmates. That in the perfect communism of the commonwealth there was but one family, and that embraced all the people. And it was the especial function of the government through its several departments and their ramifications into every part of the country, to

provide for all and equably, food, clothing, shelter, tools and appliances of trade, books or silken cloths and instruments of learning and the like. There was no traffic in the country. There was no money. And there was no individual ownership of anything except for the moment in using or wearing. And accordingly there was no hoarding or stealing, no corruption in office, neither poor man nor rich man, all sharing equally of the comforts of life and differing only in their duties, for the performance of which they had been born and bred.

At length the three plumed governesses put aside a curtain hanging before a door and entered, bidding me follow. I did so, and a few minutes afterward we were seated at opposite sides of a small table. And almost directly in front of me, over the shoulder of Nada-nana, I saw the governing woman who had overwhelmed me with her peerless beauty and sympathetic gaze, during the ceremonies connected with the tying of the treaty-knot in the afternoon.

She caught my eyes every time that I looked up from my plate; and hungry as I was and with an abundance before me, I went to bed practically supperless that night.

CHAPTER XXII.

The following morning, as I was going out of the door of my palatial residence, I saw a number of the governing women riding by on their gigantic birds, and among them the inexsuperable embodiment of womanly charms that had taken away my appetite for food and substituted a passion of conquest that sank all other considerations into comparative insignificance. Happily for me, the only woman in the world was in the van of the procession, and I did not get so little as a glance into her fascinating eyes, but I recognized her as distinctly as I would the moon among the stars and was about to—I do not know what, when I felt the electric finger taps of my governess on my shoulder saying: "They are going to the several districts of the country where their duties lie for a while; and it is very improper in you to stand and stare at them as if they were on exhibition before. Come along to breakfast, then to see the proper sights of the city, if you will."

As meek as Moses, accordingly, I accompanied my governess; and after a rather gluttonous repast to allay my disappointment, I was taken to see the semi-sacred tortoises which were looked upon by the people at large as the symbol of the country, in as much as they have existed for centuries in an all-containing shell, getting neither larger nor smaller, and perfectly healthy and contentedly happy, as the people of Revi-lona have existed in their impenetrable encasement of ice for ages in a perfect equilibrium in their constantly shifting numbers and the maintenance of their commonwealth as a communistic whole of infinite complexity in its parts and in their relations to one another and their environment.

I found them five in number, four living and one dead (the result of the accident in the panic on the wharf, of which I have given an account), and all mounted similarly on sinter platforms about as wide as the under-shell or plastrum of each and high enough to prevent the claws of the toes, when the legs and feet were pendant, from touching

the ground. In length, however, the platforms were somewhat longer than the tortoises, furnishing a support for the head and tail respectively, and a place for the deposition of food and drink within easy reach of the jaws of the monsters.

They were arranged in an open square of the common structural material of the country, sinter-opal; one in each of the corners, and the largest in the middle. The dead was, perhaps, the smallest by a foot or so; and to preserve it from decay it had been coated with the tenacious glue of the country (of which I have spoken), then top dressed with the opal-paste and phosphorescent paint.

Curiously, too, the five were females; and as I was informed, they were the sole survivors of a much greater number of males and females that wabbled about in the prehistoric ages of the country when its area was vastly larger than at present; that about the time of the establishment of the commonwealth they were twenty-two in all, five males, who were engaged in warring with one another most of the time, and seventeen females of various ages. Six centuries later, there was but one of the males alive and nine females. These lived together happily for many years; and when they died in the course of time they left behind them a family of fifteen children. And these in time were succeeded by eleven, of whom five only survived the ills to which the infantile reptiles were subject, the five females on the platforms before me.

I cannot give the exact dimensions of these enormous tortoises, as I would like to for the benefit of science; but as nearly as I could determine by stepping the length and width of the platforms, the length of the under shell of the largest was fifteen feet and that of the smallest eleven; while the length of the carapace or upper shell, following the curve of its convexity was twenty-two feet, and that of the smallest about sixteen. Their colors were black and yellow and crimson, in a variety of symmetric figures, of great regularity and attractiveness; and a line of blunt projections, extending from the tip of the tail along the top of the carapace to a knot on the head, suggested to my mind a possible enlargement of the frontal knob into a formidable horn in the extinct males and the probable weapon with which they fought their almost interminable battles, thrusting it between the shells of their adversaries and either ripping them open or rolling them over on their backs.

The monstrous relics of a bygone age before me were attended with the most scrupulous care by a corps of attendants, washed twice a day and fed as regularly a variety of vegetables and nutritious food, the large purple plantain of the country (a variety of banana, by the way, that contained a series of fully developed seeds, in striking contrast to our seedless evolutions from a common stock in the past), forming the bulk of the former and the mother-of-pearl shellfish the latter.

I was astonished, however, more by the intelligence which the tortoises displayed than their enormous bulk and the details of their history and preservation. They knew personally not only their attendants, but a great number of the inhabitants of the country who came to see them, frequently and literally conversed with them on certain subjects by exchanging winks and nods. Not, understand me fully, as one of our sportsmen may be said to chat with an intelligent spaniel or setter, he using a certain number of words and the dog smiling and fawning and wagging his tail in significant responses, or as a showman may be said to carry on a conversation with a trained horse, a

learned ass or a yard playing pig; but as a visitor in health may be said to converse with a feeble-minded and sluggish invalid, the former asking a direct question on a limited number of familiar subjects and the latter answering in monosyllables.

Thus, when I was brought before the largest of the reptiles, the three-plumed governess, winking, said:

"Togo-melo, this big man before you is the honored guest of the commonwealth."

"Eh?" responded the tortoise, looking up in affright

"What! You are not afraid of him, are you?"

"Yes."

"Because he is so big?"

"Yes."

"And not because he is so handsome?"

"No."

"Will you like him?"

"No."

"Why?"

"The reptile made no responsive wink but looking from me to her attendants and keeping her eyes fixed on them. I inferred from the movement that she was satisfied with them and did not wish to include me in their number.

"You have as many friends as you want among your old acquaintances?"

"Yes."

"How old are you?"

No response.

"Are you very, very old?"

"Yes."

"To what class do you belong—the Red?"

"No."

"The Yellow?"

"No."

"The Blue?"

"Yes."

"Do you know me?"

"Yes."

"Do you like me?"

"No."

"Do I ask too many questions?"

"Yes."

"But I see that you are washed well and fed well every day, do I not?"

"Yes."

"Then why do you not like me?"

And the intelligent tortoise drew in her legs and tail and head and closed her shell; and I felt that I was not alone in the world of Revi-lona in an otherwise inexpressible state of strained relations with the exemplary governess at my side.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Tortoise Square was on the left of the central avenue leading from the harbor to the interior of the country, and directly opposite the Subterranean Colosseum; and two or three hundred yards farther inland, in the middle of the great highway and directly under the middle of the crown of the stupendous arch across the mountain chasm stood the next of the peculiar constructions of Revi-lona to receive a visit of investigation from the honored guest of the commonwealth, under the guidance of his official governess.

"This was a circular wall about fifty feet in diameter and twenty five in height, without ornamentation of any kind, and perfectly smooth. I could not divine its purpose. I was directed, then, to look up to the arch overhead; and doing so, I beheld a little circular opening which I was informed was exactly above the center of the peculiar circular wall at my side. But this did not solve the puzzle. I then was informed that the little opening above was in reality about eight or ten feet in diameter and funnel-shaped at the top of the bridge, and as smooth as ice; and that an object cast upon the edge of the funnel was sure to descend through the circular opening and drop into the circular enclosure at my side. Still I could not make out the use of the simple but otherwise prodigious contrivance. I then was informed that the enclosure at my side was a well around a well of constantly boiling water, fed from a subterranean lake under a great part of the interior of the country and overflowing into a great sewer leading into the sea. I began to shudder as the awful purport of this combination dawned upon me. It was the place of execution. It was the place where one after another the sixteen little old foppish philosophers had been pushed into the slippy funnel above, to come whirling through the circular aperture; and then, in the sight of the thousands far and near on each side of the mighty arch, to fall as a flash of color for over five hundred feet and disappear forever in the subterranean cauldron of boiling water!

"Yes," remarked my guide and governess, "this is the public place of execution. Here the doomed criminal is despatched and disposed of, in a way perhaps as humane as any to the victim that ever has been invented and as horrible and crime-deterring to the spectators. But happily in our orderly country the death penalty has been paid in several centuries by two persons only, besides the sixteen men of science recently. These two unfortunate persons were a beautiful woman and a worthy man, who by the merest chance fell into each other's arms one night, and which was to blame or both, for not falling out immediately, neither would say; and after the birth of a child out the crime committed beyond dispute, the father and mother were executed at the same time, and the infant spared to make some amends to the commonwealth for the loss of two good citizens."

"A very sad story indeed! And a very bad place for the most horrible of imaginings! Let us change the subject and go to dinner—or anywhere from the sight of this sickening cauldron at our side and

the awful arch above our heads. But, by the way, Nada-nana, while I think of it, by our treaty am I not exempt from the operation of all your laws?"

"Of all, excepting those relating to the morals and the duties of the people, and those providing for the integrity and maintenance of the commonwealth; the former of which, I believe, include the very law under which the man and woman to whom I have referred were executed."

Whereupon I heaved a sigh that might have been heard a cable's length away!

CHAPTER XXIV

On our way to dinner I enquired of my guide and governess how the vast arch had been constructed. I had stepped the distance between the abutments and found it to be eleven hundred and forty feet; and the arch, being, as nearly as I could determine by my eye, a semi-circle, the height from the roadway to the under side of the arch was accordingly five hundred and seventy feet. "Surely," I said, "this mountain canon was not filled first with the supporting scaffolding?"

"No; the work was done altogether from above. First, a suspension bridge of silken ropes was made above the top of the projected arch, and after this had been strengthened with a more substantial cordage, coated with our tenacious glue in order to preserve it indefinitely, a skeleton framework of the arch was suspended from the bridge above and gradually built upon from the mountain sides to the middle of the chasm with layer after layer of sinter-paste, which, hardening on exposure to the atmosphere into a rock as hard as the mountain, practically brought the mountain walls nearer and nearer till they joined in the middle. After which the suspension bridge above was removed, and day after day and year after year the structure was plastered over and over with the sinter-paste till it came to be, in the course of seven centuries from the time it was planned by the immortal architect, Lapa-Kamo, until it was completed substantially as you see it today, more than a thousand years ago. Betimes large slices of the sinter have scaled off from the sides, during earthquakes or the like—as when you discharged your marvelous weapon of war—but the scar is effaced readily and the structure made perfect again by one or more applications of the plaster, as may be necessary. And as many as seven times the crown has fallen down and been rebuilt."

"But the real object of the stupendous outlay? Certainly it was not to construct a prodigious method of killing one or two criminals in a century!"

"Oh, no, no, no! Our people to be healthy and happy must be engaged constantly in one kind of work or another, and when we are not employed in procuring the necessary food for our maintenance, in manufacturing the necessary garments for our apparel and in providing for all our wants and comforts and enjoyments, we are put to building one vast structure after another, harbor walls, paved roadways throughout the country, hot and cold water conduits from sources along the confines of our country, and other public works of great or little utility, like this gigantic structure which we call the Arch of Justice. Collectively accordingly, the great structures which I have enumerated represent in a great measure the surplus energy of the mind and body of our people for many centuries."

CHAPTER XXV.

After dinner at noon, in order to dispel the gloom which hung about me since my visit to the Place of Execution for such heinous criminals as man and woman who loved each other in accordance with the primeval ordinance of Nature but in violation of the local laws of Revi-lona, and such philosophers who got tipsy once in a lifetime I suggested to my guide and governess the propriety of breaking my big bird of burden to the service for which he had been selected, by familiarizing him with my appearance, and accustoming him to my weight—or break my neck in the attempt, I pleasantly added.

To this Nada-nana acquiesced, and forthwith we set out for the coop or stable in which the monster was stalled and haltered, like a horse, a short distance from my palatial residence.

A few minutes after our arrival the groom, having put on a kind of saddle that fit around the base of the neck or shoulders of the bird like a padded cape, and adjusted a halter of triple strength around the head of the monster, led him out in an open area and around and about me until he ceased to shy from me. Then, holding out my hand with the dainties of the creatures food displayed in it, I approached cautiously; and eventually I succeeded not only in feeding him from my open palm but also in stroking his neck and patting and petting him variously. Then, on learning his sex and the fact that he was the largest and the strongest—by a trifle—of the mogas of the country, I at once dubbed him Hummingbird, by way of expressing a maximum with a minimum, or by the rule of contraries and essayed to mount from a sinter unping-block, or solid flight of steps about six feet in height; and, much to my surprise and delight, I succeeded with little difficulty; and the enormous bird bore my great weight as easily as a Percheron horse.

In an unlucky moment, however, I became a little too exultant and forgetting that my voice was a fearful tocsin of alarm in the voiceless land, I shouted out, "Hurrah! for Revi-lona and its feathered chargers!" And in an instant the gigantic bird was uncontrollable in his fright; dragging the groom along the ground hither and thither until his hold of the halter thong was relinquished in insensibility Then with strides fully as long as the leap of a racing horse and with outstretched wings—seemingly, for the purpose of balancing, like a double outrigger to a canoe—the moga made a dash for the central avenue of the city. This was reached in a moment, and at breakneck speed, away went the runaway along the opal highway in the direction of the interior of the country: and clinging fast to the neck of the bird, away went the austral Gilpin, glancing now to the right and left at the subterranean Colosseum and the Tortoise Square and now at the awful Arch of Justice with its funnel-shaped opening above and its cauldron of boiling water below; and anon at the colossal Tower of Entombment and a succession of cultivated fields and shapely towns and villages till they ceased to be objects of special interest.

Gradually, however, the bird began to fag and slacken his pace;

and I observed with a twinge of alarm that he had turned to the left from the highway and taken a narrower way that led to an elevated region of desolation a league or so ahead.

And presently he reduced his speed to a walk by the side of another bird of burden whom he had overtaken on the way; and to my inexpressible delight I saw that the rider was the loveliest of the women of Revi-lona who had overwhelmed me with her perfect world of charms!

I, of course, was excited and flushed, and my robes of state were in disorder; but the golden opportunity had come to make the acquaintance of the surpassingly beautiful woman and press my suit to win her affection, and I was not the man to lose it on account of a little more color in my face than usual and a trifling disarrangement of my dress.

"I positively could not stay behind you, and thanks to the intelligence and bottom of my two-footed steed, he has brought me unerringly to your side with the speed of a Kentucky race-horse," I said with my lips in a familiar way, as if I had known her all my life.

"Yes, I see," replied the lovely woman, with a most bewitching smile of surprise commingled with all the sweets of womankind. "The bird is the mate of the one on which I am riding, and the largest, the strongest and the swiftest of all our big birds, and accordingly he was selected to be the bearer of the honored guest of the commonwealth, who exceeds in size and weight any human being ever seen in the country."

Then, with a peculiar cluck of the tongue against the roof of her mouth, she called the attention of the groom to her, and bid him take up in his hand the trailing halter-strap of my bird, which he did at once.

And as he did so I realized that he might be a most important witness for the commonwealth in the event of a successful issue of the enterprise in which I was engaged, and in which all the fates of affection evidently were on my side; and I was haunted still with a vivid recollection of the funnel-shaped opening in the awful Arch of Justice above and the well of boiling water beneath, and the end of lovers in Revi-lona. He must be got rid of and effectually before I go another step farther—toward that horrible funnel. But how, at any risk? I have it! I will shout again, the birds will be frightened, the groom will be unable to hold them and be trampled to death, perhaps but no matter; and the two birds will run away together into the desert in front of us, and when they stop, as stop they will some time from exhaustion, the lovely woman and I will be alone in a little world by ourselves, and beyond the jurisdiction of the criminal courts of Revi-lona!

"Eureka! Eureka! What a grand thing it is to have a head on one's shoulders that is equal to any emergency!" I shouted out, as loud as I could bawl, and as I had expected in my excited imagination, the birds were affrighted and tumbled over and trampled upon the groom until he ceased to be a check in their furious plunging; and away they went together as fast as their monstrous legs could carry them into the wilderness and beyond the jurisdiction of the criminal courts of Revi-lona!

But such a wilderness! I never dreamed in the most horrible of nightmares of anything like it! Here and there, great cascading geysers, and here and there, in a seemingly interminable series, seething;

and bubbling cauldrons of mud! Here and there, roaring, hissing and swashing fumaroles; and here and there a number of vats of sulphur—some containing an infinity of forms as fantastic in their coloring as in their shape, like blue and purple spires, and red and orange domes! And then another cluster of geysers surrounded with sinter rims and incrustations of infinite form and marvelous beauty!

At length, feeling the ground to be uncertain beneath them, the gigantic birds, trembling violently, stopped in their flight at the base of an indescribably beautiful display of sinter cups in a fan-shaped form, descending from a geyser on a hillside, in a series of irregular terraces, increasing in size from the top to the bottom, and all overflowing with water, steaming above, but gradually cooling in its interrupted descent—the whole display being in color as perfect a combination of rose-petal and pearl as the complexion of the supernally beautiful woman at my side.

"The very place among all the marvelous places of the world I would have selected to alight," I said cheerily to my enchanting companion, who having caught the contagion of trembling from her bird of burden, looked to be a little more alarmed than she was in reality "for here at the feet of the two most beautiful objects it has ever been the happy fortune of a man to behold and worship as he will, the one or the other, the one in an inanimate form and the other in an animate; the one dead and the other living; the one dispassionate and the other impassioned, the one an over-flowing well [illegible] of boiling water and the other an overflowing fountain of boiling blood; the one this wonderful mountain to whom I turn my back and the other this marvelous woman to whom I turn my face and extend my arms, while my heart is hammering out a welcome to her in my bosom! Come, my beloved, let us alight and—Whoa! Hummingbird! Whoa! You confounded beast of a bird! Cannot you stand still!" I cried out as the bird beneath me began to plunge and then to flounder and sink and then fall forward. Whereupon I went over his head, through an ice-like crust of rotten sinter and came to a sudden halt in an ooze of decomposition of about the consistency and feel of cold soft soap.

Happily my great weight broke a large area of the icelike crust and when I rose to the surface I was able to get my head above the floating fragments: but in despite of all my exertions I could not extricate myself from the extraordinary slough. The utmost I could accomplish was to keep my chin upon the edge of the sinter-ice by extending my arms over the unbroken field as far as possible. In doing which I imitated the gigantic bird, which, without a struggle stretched out his neck and spread his wings over the partly firm and partly fragmentary crust around him; awaiting assistance from others or death, as the case might be, in motionless tranquility.

At the earliest instant possible I looked up to see what had become of the loveliest of all evolutions in the form of a woman, and beheld her sitting apparently in the greatest ease and comfort, smiling at the narrowest escape from death I had ever made in my life,—at the ludicrous appearance which my slime-bedaubed head and face presented above the treacherous crust, at my utter helplessness in the disagreeable ooze,—aye, at my imminent death from sheer exhaustion!

I said smiling, but the word grinning would be nearer the truth, were it admissible in describing the mirthful movements of the face of the most beautiful of women.

At length I endeavored to implore her to assist me by winking my

words, but my eyelids were overloaded with sinter slime to such an extent that I could not move them in accordance with the code. Then I tried to express myself with the movement of my lips, and in this I failed, too, for my weight in great part supported by my chin, fixed my mouth effectually for communicating mutely with my lips.

In this dilemma, when I was about to sink in despair, I bethought me of the power of wagging the ears which I possessed; and realizing by a shake of the head that they were free from the drooping corners of my matting headgear from their burden of slime, I began to wag them in accordance with the code of lateral movements and express myself intelligently—howsoever ludicrously in my plight and to a young woman who had never seen the like before.

"Oh, my beloved, will you not assist me?" I waggishly said in one sense, but most seriously in another. "You are on firm ground, I doubt not from the way your bird stands. Alight, I implore you, and cast to me the end of your sash. I then will take hold of it, and while you pull, steadied by your hold to the halter of your bird I will be able to get out of this hole, which I believe is an old terrace vat submerged beneath the constant flow from above and covered with a hardened scum, and of a size in keeping with the base of the terraces above it."

But no sooner had I begun to wag my ears in words than the grim face of the loveliest of womankind evolved into the facial and bodily contortions of uncontrollable laughter. At length, during a lull in the tempest of her ungovernable mirthfulness or hysterical hilarity, if you will, she, gasping for breath, replied with the movements of her lips: "Oh, no, no, no, honored guest of the commonwealth! You are now where you should have been long ago; and we should have had little or no trouble on your account. Besides, you have talked to me in a very improper manner, and I would compromise myself most seriously if I were to assist you and put myself in your power in this lonely wilderness. Oh, no, no, no! Have patience; our footsteps will be followed, and in an hour or two or a day at the farthest, assistance will be here to you and your bird to extricate you from your common predicament to help me to laugh!"

"But you certainly sympathize with me in this sea of slime, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, I sympathize with you in your distress, but that does not prevent me from rejoicing at my escape from your clutches and laughing at the most ludicrous spectable the eye of man or woman has ever beheld on the planet! The most marvelous of men, but a fortnight ago, in the most marvelous of boats and possessed of absolutely unimaginable resources of omnipotence, as it seemed to us, now a half-drowned, helpless wretch in a mudhole, pleading in vain to a lonely woman whom he has insulted with criminal advances, to assist him in getting out—to insult her again! Oh, no, no, no, honored guest of the commonwealth, your welfare and mine lies in your hanging by the chin until you can get other help than mine!"

"But you certainly sympathized with me when you saw me in the great Ceremonial Basin of your country and pitied me?"

"I did, it is true; for I marveled how in the world a boy could grow to be as big as you without becoming a man, and how uncomfortable you must feel among men and women who have learned to behave themselves properly in private and in public. And I was not the only one

that sympathized with you and pitied you when you got into a whirlwind of rage—all the men and women who saw you did so; as all rejoiced that you had been placed under the guidance and control of the most estimable, intelligent and beautiful of the women of Revi-lona, the peerless Nada-nana."

"Gosh! bosh! my official guide and governess is beautiful, intelligent and estimable in every way, but she is not the most beautiful of the women of Revi-lona or of the world at large—she sits before me now, the ultimate of grace and beauty which the organic world has attained in its endless evolution from a less to a more perfect type".

"Oh, no, base flatterer. I am not to be beguiled by the wagging of ears in untruthful compliment. I have had in my hands the marvelous mirror from the stores of your ship, and I have beheld my features and studied them and compared them with the features of others; and I know that I am far from being the most beautiful of the women of Revi-lona—less so indeed than the fifteen beautiful women who were made a secrifice to you; to satisfy the presumptive demands of the most marvelous of men and infinitely less so than the peerless Nada-nana. Your fifteen attendants are approximately perfect types of our five classes; while I, belonging to the noble class by right of birth, in my physical characteristics am a mixture of all and inferior to any and all.'

"No, my beloved, believe me. You are a happy combination of the most beautiful of the excellent features of your several classes, and consequently surpassing them severally and collectively. And that is why I left all the women of the world behind me to follow you into this wilderness."

"And fall headlong into a most deserving pit of punishment for your folly and falsehood. So, say no more with your significant ears till—Hark! I hear the beating of a drum announcing the coming of assistance. And after this, never speak to me again, or I will make you the laughing-stock of the commonwealth instead of the honored guest by revealing all that has happened today. By the way, is the mud in which you are immersed hot or cold? And where in the world will you get a change of raiment in the wilderness? I fear me, I shall die outright to see you on your feet again or seated on the back of your bird; and to save my life I will withdraw. May you heed the lesson."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Soon after the departure of my lovely tormentor and scourger, in the gradually deepening dusk of evening, eleven men came to the rescue of the honored guest of the commonwealth and his feathered steed, Hummingbird; and having observed that the moga was in greater danger of sinking than myself, I directed them by the movable parts of my body which were visible, to extricate the big bird first, if possible. This they did readily by making ropes of their sashes and passing them under and about the helpless creature's wings, their little weight enabling them to go with caution almost to the edge of the rotten crust; and then pulling toward them altogether. Curiously, too, the moment the bird felt the strain on his wings, he was encouraged to help himself and found to his and my surprise that he could touch the bottom of the sinter vat with his feet without submerging himself above the back in the slime. That, at any time, he might have stepped out of the pool without assistance. And no sooner was he on solid ground, with his feathers plastered close to his body with the slime--the proverbial hen on a rainy day in the most grotesque of exaggerated caricature—than off he scampered after his mate.

The improvised rope was then thrown to me; and as my extraordinary bulk appeared to them for the first time and without any foreknowledge, in their remoteness from the scene of my recent operations, they dropped the rope in affright and took to their heels as fast as they could in the direction the bird had vanished in the darkness, leaving me to fall back, but happily not beyond my depth, and flounder about for a moment or two before I could get out and follow the frightened men. My only chance of getting out of the volcanic wilderness before daylight lying in keeping them within hearing, if not within sight.

I was incommoded by my slimy garments hanging about me heavily, but thanks to my superior strength and length of stride, I was soon as close to the heels of my panic-stricken guides as I dared to go without scattering them to the right and left and leaving me at a standstill in bewilderment.

In this way we reached the confines of Revi-lona and a luminous roadway which brought us in due time to a village. Here I halted in the middle of the street, while my guides ran hither and thither, spreading terror on all sides, till the whole community was in a state of consternation.

At length I espied one of the majestic governing women coming toward me, and believing her to be my enchanting beauty coming to my relief, now that she could do so with propriety and in safety, my heart began to beat more audibly than while I was running. To my disappointment and approximation to disgust, however, she proved to be a woman of five and thirty summers at least, fair it is true and full of blood, but fussy in the extreme, and as overzealous in ministering to my comforts as my nonpariel had been indifferent, and as officiously tender as the latter had been judiciously severe.

"Dear me! To see the honored guest of the commonwealth in such a plight; and in my district. I shall be disgraced and dishonored forever! Were it not for your imperial port, I really would not be able to recognize you, and your magnificent proportions as a man among a million. Dear me! What shall I do. I am distracted!"

"If you please, my dear governess,' I responded, "call out your fire department first, and let the hose be turned on me until I shall be cleansed of the filthy slime with which you see I am covered, and which is beginning to harden around me like an encasing shell."

The fussy governess did as I directed, and a number of men in amazement and fear soon began to squirt hot and cold water upon me from several sources, and continued to play upon me until all my garments were swished and swashed away from my body and I was as clean from the top of my head to the soles of my feet as dashing and splashing water could make me; and still they continued to squirt in utter disregard of all my signaling to the contrary, with lips and legs and arms and ears in turn. Till, with rising anger, I roared out:

"Stop! you varlets! or you will drown me!"

And immediately the several nozzles were dropped and I was left alone in the middle of the luminous highway with the fussy and distracted woman of five and thirty and the attributes as aforesaid—I gasping for breath and rubbing my eyes and jarring the water out of my ears by bending my head to one side and the other, while I hopped about on one and the other leg; and she staring at me and wringing her hands and muttering with her lips: "Dear me! The honored guest of the commonwealth stark naked before me in the middle of the road at midnigght! And nobody near to protect me! What shall I do?"

"My dear governess, I responded, "clap your hands and summon your attendants. Then bid them bring me a towel or two and a suit of clothes big enough to cover me—the window curtains will do for a shift, if they can find nothing bigger."

The fussy woman did so, and in due time several towels from as many sources around me were thrown to me out of the gloom beyond the edge of the highway, and I was mopped and rubbed dry, and——

"No, I will not for the world! The honored guest of the commonwealth should not be appareled in rugs or matting or curtains or other unseemly garments as long as he is in my district at any rate. Never! Never must his magnificent form be dishonored with such drapery! I will go naked myself a thousand times rather and give him the only robe which I have brought along with me from the city—that on my back!"

"Then, my dear governess, retire to the privacy of your chamber, and after disrobing, please dispatch to me your garments by one of your attending maids, who shall approach me either backward or blindfolded."

"Dear me! What an ingenious plan! I never would have thought of it in a lifetime. The honored guest of the commonwealth has a head I see in keeping with the grandeur of his person!"

The distracted woman then, imagining me to be an emperor, I suppose, withdrew from my presence backward; and a few minutes afterward one of her attendants, a charming woman of eighteen or twenty (in blue, and more like a governess than an attendant, which I could not understand at the time), smiling from her head to her heels as I inferred from her wriggling, approached me backward, carrying

the governess's robes in her arms before her; and as she could not see how close to or far from me she was, she came on till she fell plump into my arms—to receive several kisses behind the screen of the uplifted garments before she could or would extricate herself and run back to her mistress.

The fussy governess was now in a worse state of distraction than before. It was her duty to uphold the honor of her district and country in treating hospitably the honored guest of the commonwealth; but how was she to do it in deshabille? Besides, the walls of her house within and without were luminous. However, by the time I was arrayed in her robes and ready for my supper, the zealous governess was behind the curtains of one of her windows, held together by her hands under her chin, looking out to see what I should say next should be done for my entertainment. I was touched by her solicitude, and having approached the window to the farthest point perhaps within the limits of propriety, I thanked her for her apparel and then informed her that I was as hungry as a wolf.

"Dear me! how thoughtless I am!" she responded, letting go her hold on the curtains by way of illustrating the truth of her remark and then clutching them again in confusion. "Of course, you are hungry; but in the awful dilemma I am in as the governess of the district, what in the world shall I or can I do?"

"My dear governess, why not clap your hands again and call your attendants and instruct one of them to take me to the refectory of the village. Or, rather, my dear governess, let me clap my hands, since——"

But the zealous governess of the district was not to discharge the duties of her office by proxy, and having clapped her hands and summoned her attendants, she directed one of them to take me to the common dining-room of the town and supply me with the best on the pantry shelves; and the one who came forward to take charge of me happily was the charming woman who had delivered the apparel to me so artlessly artful that I not only admired her tact, but also was delighted with it.

"I thank you, my dear governess," I responded; "but I do not wish to put anybody to any unnecessary trouble on my account, hungry as I am. An egg or two of your big breed of fowls or a second joint—anything will do"

At which bit of pleasantry my charming escort smiled in her peculiar way—all over or wriggling from head to foot; and in a few minutes we were in the common eating-room of the town—I devouring everything set before me, and she supplying me in amazement at my seemingly insatiate appetite and incommensurable capacity.

At length, my hunger having been satisfied, I was about to thank and tip my attendant, when the fussy and zealous governess appeared at the door in an improvised gown of her window curtains, which being silk and blue in color, she could wear with propriety; and having dismissed the charming maid—rather harshly and peremptorily and to my regret—she expressed a thousand apologies for this and a thousand regrets for that, and declared she would like to do everything in her power to make the honored guest of the commonwealth comfortable and happy, but really she did not know what to do!

"My dear governess," I replied, "it is long past midnight and you must be exhausted with the duties of your high and honorable office; and I beg to suggest the propriety of recuperation before the dawn of

another day with its exacting round of duties—in short, my dear governess, I suggest that you go to bed."

"And leave the honored guest of the commonwealth in the streets for the night, to my eternal disgrace and that of my district and country. Oh, dear me, no! It is true there are two rooms in my house—but dear me, what shall I do?"

"My dear governess, since you leave it to me, I will tell you. Do you occupy the one and I will occupy the other; and in order that all the difficulties in the way of propriety may be overcome, do you promise me to remain in your apartment until sunrise and I will promise to remain in mine until sunset."

And accordingly we promised each other.

But about the time I was beginning to lose consciousness in sleep I felt a finger tap on my shoulder saying: "Honored guest of the commonwealth, what in the world was it that I promised to do? My memory is so treacherous that I have forgotten it already. Dear me, what shall I—shall I do!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

The day was well advanced when I awoke in the morning, and on arising I found that somebody had been in my chamber during the night or in the early morning and substituted my own raiment (washed and ironed, or done over somehow and looking approximately as bright as ever), for that of my fussy and forgetful but exceedingly amiable hostess, the governess of the district; and wisely accepting the situation without casting a suspicion on anybody, I put it on and strolled out into the streets of the village to see what I could see in a general way and to get my breakfast in particular.

To my delight, I soon found myself attended by the artlessly artful young women of the evening before; and at breakfast the following dialogue took place between us:

"Where is your mistress, the amiable governess of the district?"

"She is on the top of the signaling tower in the sight of all the people of the village, where, happily, she has been ever since she provided you with an improvised suit of clothes, made out of the window curtains, I believe."

"Humph! Then I must have been dreaming?"

"Very likely. You had a late supper; and you either may have eaten a little too much or something that did not agree with you well."

"Well, well, be it so. But who removed the improvised apparel from my chamber and substituted my own, in a condition almost as good as new?"

"A woman to be trusted."

"You are a wise woman."

"To a very good purpose, when the honored guest of the commonwealth and the governess of the district are otherwise."

"Humph! And as pretty as wise, I may add."

"I am pained to hear you say so; for I am vain enough to think that I am prettier than wise."

"And, in fact, you are, infinitely."

"I accept the amendment with thanks. Now let us change the subject. Do you know what you should do today?"

"Truly, I do not."

"Then I will tell you. You must keep away from the governess of the district until nightfall, at least, lest the walls of the houses be found winking at one another when the public censor comes along; and since you are in the midst of the great silk district of the country, if it be agreeable to you I will accompany you——"

"And suffer in consequence like your mistress——"

"As a grain of sand to a mountain."

"Humph! The wisest of women! Well, come I am ready. But I must say I am not interested especially in the subject proposed, for I have grown silkworms myself and unwound their cocoons and——'

"Then you have done something of which we have no knowledge, while we, perhaps, in obtaining our supply from spiders, may be doing something of which you never dreamed, good dreamer that you are."

"From spiders?"

"Yes, a species of spider, the male and female of which differ in size, the body of the former being about the bigness of your thumb, while that of the female is as large as your fist."

"Or, in other words,' I broke in, 'about as disportionate in size as the men and women of Revi-lona; and I will wager a dozen kisses with you, my wise and winsome woman, that the big females keep the little males in a state of subjection, as the big and beautiful women of Revi-lona keep the little and scrawny men under their thumbs. Confess, have you not modeled your government after that of your spiders?"

"I have not accepted your wager yet; and wise as I am, for the life of me I cannot tell whether or not I would be the better off for winning or losing. In either case, I would get the kisses, would I not?"

"Undoubtedly.'

"Then I see no reason—while we are in this thicket of plantains on our way to the silk-factory—why I should not get my dues."

"Nor do I hear one or smell one or taste one or feel one.'

"There—there—you have exceeded the count by a score. Now let me tell you more about the spiders. The big female always kills and eats the little male after he has kissed her; and in order to preserve the species the ferocious females are haltered and tied fast in separate stalls, while the feeble males are locked securely in cages and guarded night and day by one of their attendants.'

"A poor, little, pitiful man, I dare say."

"No; on the contrary, by a corps of our grandest women who have been selected for the important post only after an examination extending over several years as to their fitness. Twice in the history of the country (the first time, during a general panic caused by an earthquake and the second time during a local fright occasioned by an extraordinary flood of boiling water from the neighboring geyser region), the number of males have been reduced to a single individual. The survivor in the first instance escaped his pursuers by running over a wounded mogan lying on the road, while the ravenous females stopped to gorge themselves on the monster bird, tearing it into shreds among them with their tusks, which are as long as my finger; while fortunate male in the second instance escaped by climbing somehow to the top of the signal tower."

"A good place of refuge for males, then, as well as females?"

"Yes; for the one to escape from boiling water and the other from boiling blood. But—to return to the preservation of the spiders—the dangers of losing the little males altogether, and destroying one of the most useful of the industries of our people have been reduced to a minimum by keeping a stock of the males in as many as thirteen of our districts."

"Well, this is truly a ticklish and complicated business."

"You may say so with greater emphasis when you have heard all. You must know, now, that these spiders are naturally insectivorous and carnivorous, and to supply them with food is a more ticklish and complicated business—to use your words—than to keep the ferocious females from devouring the feeble males. The bulk of their daily food consists of the bodies of a peculiar moth called tupi-lolo, the females of which are wingless. Have you ever known the like?"

"Yes, the female of the common rusty vapor moth of my native state is wingless."

"Well, this ages ago was an advantage to our tupe-lolo; for being luminous after night, the males, with perfect wings, were guided to the females by their light, and the preservation of the species was assured. But, curiously, after the invention of our phosphorescent lightways and walls, the males were drawn to the greater lights around them; and the cultivation of silk in our isolated country again hung on the preservation of a single male, the wings of which by some happy mischance had been broken on his emergence from his coccoon. Since then it is the special duty of a number of trustworthy women to watch the coccoons, and as the males emerge, to clip the wings of a number and place them among the breeding females. And now, curiously, the females have ceased to emit any luminosity at night, since it is no longer necessary; as the spiders have forgotten how to weave their webs among the branches of the trees, since they have been provided with their food at our hands; and I doubt not that they would cease to yield silk were it not drawn from them daily. There is still another intricacy in the matter of food of the spiders. While the bulk of their daily food consists of the moth which I have described, a certain variation and seasoning betimes is necessary to maintain the health of the spiders and the strength and texture of the silk. This is the carcase of every moga that dies and large quantities of the mother-of pearl shellfish, which are obtained in our artificial beds on both sides of our harbor and transported hither in baskets on the backs of the fishermen; but especially a very peculiar species of fish which is blind and inhabits a subterranean hot water lake, from which it is taken through a single opening by means of a most extraordinary bait——"

"Hold! hold, I beg you. This is getting to be too ticklish and complicated for my comprehension."

"Oh, I beg you, in turn, do not give up until I have come to the most ticklish and complicated part of the whole, the preservation of the single species of plant in the country which supplies in its leaves the food of the caterpillars of the tupe-lolo moth. This is a small and short-lived tree which is found in two forms, strange as it may seem to you—now do not laugh;—male and female."

"I shall not laugh at that, I assure you; for I am familiar with a number of similar plants in my own country—dioecious or living in two houses, as we call them."

"Well, like the spiders and the human beings of our country, the

female trees of this species are larger than the males; and they grow only in the richest of soils and furnish the leaves on which the caterpillars live; and the small male trees thrive only on poor ground, which generally is at a distance from the rich. Now our wise men are of the opinion that before the isolation of our peculiar country the species was preserved either by the male trees growing on higher ground than the female, thus permitting the fertilizing pollen of the one to descend on the other, or by a kind of insect frequenting the flowers of both for food of one kind or another, and carrying the pollen on its legs and wings from one to the other. Howsoever, in this country neither the high poor land is found above the fertile nor the supposed insect; and the species ages ago would have become extinct in our country were it not for a careful process of artificial fertilization which has been carried on uninterruptedly for many centuries. When the blossoms of the trees have attained their perfection, the lowered branches of the male trees are shaken gently and the pollen falls on wide cloths laid beneath. The sheets then are carried to the female trees and the pollen is taken up on the tips of the finest of the feathers of the moga and transferred to the female flowers by a number of specially trained women belonging to our tactile, or feeling, class, in which the sense of touch is the most highly developed—those wearing the orange-colored dress, as doubtless you are aware. So, you see, seri-culture with us is an extremely ticklish and complicated business; and were it not for its great importance, in the edsence of any other suitable material in our country out of which a thread could be made, we should be reduced to the necessity of wearing clothing of paper, similar to that of which our napkins and towels are made—from the inner bark of one of our trees. But since we are approaching the edge of the impenetrable thicket and since I may have made a miscount——"

"Yes, I understand you and as well the wisdom of your people in putting the preservation of your isolated and most complicated community altogether in the hands of the women. The men, in their wrangling for supremacy in one way or another, would have destroyed it ages ago by neglecting in their strife one or more of the essentials of their preservation. Men may acquire wisdom, but women excel in applying it to the beneficent ends of mankind's existence. And since I never count kisses, with a man's extravagance in that as in other things, let us begin again and continue till the world shall have passed away into star-gas."

"No; one will suffice; then du'y."

I found the silk-yielding spiders as my superior guide had described them. The females big, hairy creatures, with a spread of eighteen or twenty inches and most formidable tusks, with curious yellow circles around their eight eyes, making them very conspicuous, and a number of brownish zigzag markings in a jet-black ground over the thorax and abdomen which softened somewhat their ferocious appearance; the males similar in color and markings, but so disproportionately small as to be apparently a distinct species. The young, however, differ greatly in appearance from the adults, being for several weeks after their hatching almost invisible to the eye by reason of their transparency and chameleon-power of assuming the color of their surroundings—doubtless a means of escaping their enemies in a state

of nature, but a serious difficulty in the way of bringing them up by hand.

I was interested more in the strange contrivance by which the silk was drawn from the gigantic females, than in their natural and artificial history. This was a kind of treadmill and reel combined; the spider being put in a cage on the upper side of a wheel and compelled by coaxing, tickling, petting and other devices until she had learned to go through her work as a matter of habit, to turn the wheel under her a certain number of times, in accordance with her powers of yielding; and the several strands of silk as they came from the spinnerets either were permitted to unite in one strand as in a state of nature or were kept by an ingenious device in any combination desired, for the several grades of silk from the finest to the coarest. The wheel in revolving dipped into a trough containing hot water, which prevented the natural glue of the strands from uniting on the reel in a solid mass. Sixteen reels at a time were under the care of one of the attendants, after she had broken her ugly charges to their daily task, and the sixteen sets of sixteen, which were in the factory which I visited, all in motion at one time, were a spectacle more amazing to me than a first view of one of the great cotton mills of Massachusetts. On one of the wheels was a stubborn spider, who would not work without the promise of a piece of fish suspended in front of her, to be given her after her hank had been wound.

All the attendants in this curious factory were relays of women belonging to the tactile or orange-clad class; several of them being so exquisitely delicate and sensitive as to realize the idea of spirituelle and ethereal as fully as possible by living flesh and blood; seemingly in mimicry of the transparent infantile spiders in their charge.

"But how do these delicately fingered women get these ferocious spiders on and off their several reels and in and out of their cages?" I asked my guide a dozen times, impatiently. At length I witnessed the operation. Every spider had a halter passed around the body between the thorax and abdomen; and by this she was lifted safely by the attendant, and transferred from reel to cage and back again; and when refractory or dilatory, she either was coaxed and petted or switched or sprinkled with hot water, as her individual nature required.

Then, having seen the food of the spiders prepared, the fish and the tupi-lolo moth, and having inspected male and female specimens of the dioecious shrub or small tree which supplied the food of the caterpillar of the moth—a tree which seemed to me to be a kind of mulberry, with polymesphous leaves—I remarked to my intelligent guide that I had seen, but not eaten enough, for one day; and we set out to return to the village by way of the impenetrable thicket, of course; while, as I learned afterward, we might have taken a shorter course, but without being under cover for a yard of the way.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

On emerging from the grove and looking in the direction of the tower, we saw the amiable governess was still at her post of honor and above suspicion; and as soon as she saw us, she signaled: "The big bird of burden of the honored guest of the commonwealth has been returned to him. What shall I do?"

"Have him put in the stable till I need him," I replied, waving my arms. "And that will be never," I added to my guide,—"for I am content to abide here forever with the most amiable and manageable governess in the country and the wisest, the merriest and the prettiest guide and attendant. But what is the matter now? See, the governess is signaling again."

"The honored guest of the commonwealth is informed that his official guide and companion, the Governess Nada-nana, is on her way hither, and will arrive about nightfall. What shall I do'"

"Remain in the tower till nightfall, then come down and receive your associate in the government of Revi-lona." Then, turning to my confidential friend, I, sighing, added: "There, that is always the way with me. No sooner am I placed on the pinnacle of happiness than I am plunged into a geyser slough or some other depth of misery!"

"What! You certainly do not dislike the company of Nada-nana, who in the opinion of the people of Revi-lona, is the highest type of woman which the country, perhaps, has ever produced—beautiful, wise, discreet, faithful, considerate, affectionate and courageous in the extreme, the country's heroine above all others!"

"That is it, exactly. She is entirely too perfect for me to associate with without feeling, to a most uncomfortable degree sometimes, my own imperfection—in comparison with her—a monster of unworthiness."

"Alas! how I have been deceived in you"

"Stop! or you will forfeit the good opinion which I have formed of your wisdom in deciding the moment that you saw me that you could fall into my arms without offending me in the least; and that you must keep your amiable governess out of my reach on the top of a tower the livelond day that I am in the neighborhood. Now, to dinner, with a sadly impaired appetite on my part, I assure you."

That necessary function performed, some time in the afternoon the happy thought came into my head that my big bird of burden had been returned to me by the woman who affected me more than all the other women of Revi-lona combined—arousing me like a call to arms to an old war-horse; and that if I only would get on his back and give him his own way, he would take me to her with the speed of the wind! Inflamed in an instant at the thought of getting away from Nada-nana and entering the enchanting presence of the loveliest of her associates, I pretended to my attendant that I desired to mount my feathered steed and go in the direction in which my official guide and companion was coming to meet her and accompany her in state to the village.

And in a few minutes I was again on the back of Hummingbird, wincing and going sidewise, lowering his head and spreading his wings as if he were impatient for another race. The new groom was terrified at the excitement of the bird, and having assured him that I could manage the champing charger without his assistance, he put into my extended hand the end of the halter-strap.

The big bird did not realize for an instant that he was free; but when he did, he lowered his head and spread his wings and away he went like a quarter-horse!

I kept my seat easily, clinging to the monster's neck, and after a more or less furious ride for an hour or so along one of the circuit roads of the country, as I afterward learned, he slackened his speed to a pace in going through a village and stopped at a stable door, or more correctly pranced about restlessly in front of a stable door.

In a little while I was surrounded by a wondering crowd, and when I was about to dismount without assistance and let the bird go where he would, I was thrilled to my marrow by seeing a governess approaching me—and the very woman whom I desired so passionately to see!

"Well, here I am, face to face, with you again! And how shall I ever thank you sufficiently for sending me the means of coming so directly and quickly! Cunning woman, in keeping with your incomparable charms—why, a man in a month of Sundays would never have thought of a plan so simple in execution and so splendid in its result! But I am impatient to dismount to——"

"Oh, do not yet, I beg you, honored guest of the commonwealth till your bird has entered the stable; for otherwise, unhaltered as he is, he will escape and do irreparable damage, perhaps, before he shall have been taken again."

And to oblige the surpassingly beautiful woman, who seemed to be concerned deeply for the security of my feathered steed, I waited until she, with her own fair hands, had pulled the heavy curtain-netting of the door aside and proudly sat on the restless bird until he had brushed past the loveliest of women and stood stock still in the stable.

I then dismounted and found that the curtain-netting had been permitted to fall back over the doorway, and upon closer investigation with my eyes and hands and the whole strength of my body, I found that I neither could unfasten the netting nor break a single strand of the rope of which it was made.

In fine, I found that I had been trapped by the artful woman; and about the time I realized the fact that I was in a situation scarcely less ludicrous than in the winter-slough, but neither so dangerous nor disagreeable, the fascinating governess approached the netting, and smiling most bewitchingly around her moving lips, said: "I am delighted to see you here, honored guest of the commonwealth. I extend to you the hospitality of the district of which I have the honor to be the governess at present; and I sincerely trust you will find the accommodations which I have been obliged to give you suitable in a measure at least to your distinguished character. You came unannounced and unexpectedly, otherwise I might have had a bath and a bed prepared for you, such as you are wont to make use of while traveling in Ilevi-lona. In conclusion, I beg to suggest that you will find the manger the safest bed in which to repose tonight, for however cruelly and persistently your bedfellow may peck and bite you with his beak, he will hurt you infinitely less than with his powerful legs; possibly breaking every bone in your body before morning. If

you will be imprudent enough to give him a chance. Good night and happy dreams!"

I had little to say in reply, and I said it with as few movements of the lips as possible: "It is a long lane that knows no turning, as we say in my native country; and if the same be as true here as there, I hope to be able to show you some day that I am neither merciless nor pitiless, as you are now. Good night."

CHAPTER XXIX.

The manger was unquestionably the safest place, but I found it cramped for a man of my proportions, and no sooner had I crouched into it than I found the fodder which it contained was as prickly as a gooseberry bush, and the big bird, deprived of his evening's meal, kept picking at me and pinching and biting me till hurt about the head by one of my frantic kicks, he kept away from me for the remainder of the night—during which a world of thoughts revolved in my sleepless mind, of sweet revenge commingled with a question whether or not it were better to lie on the prickles and thorns near the top of the manger from which I could get out in the morning; or to remove the fodder and lie on the smooth bottom of the sinter-box, from which, perhaps, I might not be able to extricate myself when I would? And not being able to decide the matter, I suffered the gooseberry bushs till morning.

Then my breakfast was late, but it came at last, a bountiful and well prepared meal, which bit by bit was passed through the netting to me by a trembling old woman so near-sighted that she could see only my big hands and concluded that I was a monster shaped somewhat like a lobster with its claws so disproportionate in size to its body—greatly to the amusement of my lovely tormentor, who informed me of the fact when she honored me with a visit of state to express the wishes of a hostess that I had passed the night pleasantly. I learned also in this interview with my entrancing tormentor that she and Nada-nana had been signaling to each other at sunrise; and that some time in the afternoon my official guide and governess would come to me and release me from my confinement—for a little exercise in the open air, which, perhaps, the honored guest of the commonwealth might require for the benefit of his health.

Whereupon the beautiful woman went away, smiling and without a word in reply to her sarcastic remarks from me; and after one of the most protracted of the dreary days of my existence, Nada-nana arrived, and when she saw me imprisoned with my big bird in his stable, the very personification of dejection, she turned to the governess of the district and with a pale face, quivering lips and flashing eyes, demanded why the honored guest of the commonwealth had been subjected to the dishonorable treatment which she behold.

The superbly beautiful woman curtly and proudly replied: "I, Kala-pata, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, the governess of this district, make answers to questions relating to my conduct only to all my associates in the government of Revi-lona, in congress assembled. The honored guest of the commonwealth, or the dis-

honored, as the case may be, however, may reply to your question, if he will."

I had nothing to say, however. I was crestfallen. And after Nada-nana had released me, I stood by her side a mass of humiliation somehow molded in the shape and semblance of a man, but nothing more.

Presently Nada-nana turned again to the governess of the district and in the most formal and chilly manner said: "The honored guest of the commonwealth and his official guide and companion, Nada-nana, as she has been tattooed and registered officially, and who, in attestation of her distinguished services to the commonwealth wears three plumes in her bonnet, regret that they cannot remain any longer in the district which is governed by Kala-pata and be the recipients of its hospitality."

"As the honored or the dishonored guest of the commonwealth will and his official guide and companion. The way is now as open to the going as the coming."

Nada-nana then directed her groom to bring out my feathered steed, and assist me in mounting, and to hold to the bird's halter with the pluck which he was wont to exhibit in her service This done, she bade her own bird stoop or crouch before her, and to my surprise, she leaped into her seat without assistance; and having urged her bird to rise, she started off without further ceremony.

I followed on Hummingbird, who, a little jaded from his recent race and dearth of food overnight, was more subdued than ever I had seen him before, walked along very quietly.

I wanted to look over my shoulder and take a parting glance at the woman who still fascinated me in despite of the horrible treatment to which she had subjected me, but my heart failed me at the last moment and I got only a glimpse of her face out of the corner of my eye—revealing a proud and haughty spirit enjoying a signal victory and proclaiming defiance to the world.

We proceeded this for a mile or so, when suddenly I heard the clapping of Nada-nana's hands in alarm, and looking up, I observed that she had turned her moga to one side to make way for a riderless male bird of enormous size who was advancing in a threatening attitude, his head high in the air, his wings spread, as his feathers ruffled with the effect of increasing his apparent size a third or more, and uttering a peculiar sound like a combination of the hank of a wild goose and the metallic clatter of a guinea fowl.

At the same time the gigantic bird beneath me began to prepare for the inevitable onset of an antagonist of approximately equal proportions, by strutting and spreading his wings and ruffling his feathers and returning the peculiar clanking sounds of defiance with an additional whistling snort.

My groom in affright dropped the halter-thong of Hummingbird and ran to the side of Nada-nana's bird, who seemed to be as delighted at the approaching conflict as a lady of old might have been at a tilt between rival knights for her hand.

I wanted to get away, too, but before I could dismount without running an imminent risk of being trampled to the ground and my body made a prominent part of the battlefield, the two were running toward each other at full speed.

The shock of the collision was terrific, and thanks to my great weight added to that of my charger the rebound of the attacking bird

was so great as to throw him on his back and convert him into a local tornado of the most astonishing character—the configuration of a bird being lost in the general inversion of all his movements; while the rebound to my bird was sufficient to tumble me backward over his lowered rump to the ground, from which I arose in an instant with a flashing thought in my noggin that I was indulging again in one of the special delights of football in my native country.

Presently the attacking bird regained his feet and prepared to renew the battle, while Hummingbird strutted about in a lordly supercilious manner, as if he were infinitely above bothering himself about an antagonist whom he had vanquished completely with the exception of an insignificant bit of bluff. The attacking bird, however, was in earnest and forced a renewal of the conflict by rushing at the victor and converting his strut into a seemingly disastrous stagger.

The chances of ultimate success were now about equally divided, and the combatants began to act with more deliberation and circumspection, going sideways round each other and doing an infinite deal of stretching and swinging their necks, while they continued to clank and snort a mutual defiance.

Presently they came into collision again, but at short range; and instead of shearing off after the shock, each seized the other at the base of the right wing with his powerful beak and held fast; and then the real fight or the tug of war commenced. They beat each other with their wings till the muscles of their fore-limbs were exhausted: then they clawed at each other's breast, then they rubbed their breast bones against each other, and pushed and struggled as if they were engaged in a wrestling bout. I became intensely interested in the contest, and standing near, I applauded and encouraged, directed and advised and insisted on fair play, as if they were heavy-weights of my own species before me, who understood every word I said—for in my excitement I used my vocal organs in expressing myself.

At length it became evident to me that the gigantic birds would maintain their holds until one or both would sink in utter exhaustion or death, and my interest in the struggle subsided. At this time I became aware that the fight had attracted a great throng of people, and among them a number of the keepers of the big birds with their usual appliances to restrain and separate the males when engaged in waging war with one another; but astonished at my bulk and my extraordinary voice, they kept aloof.

I withdrew accordingly to the side of Nada-nana, and kept my mouth closed; and the keepers began at once to put an end to the conflict and preserve the valuable birds, if possible. First, they threw a kind of bolas or a rope with a weight at each end, around the legs of the combatants which hobbled them effectually, and then they threw pellets of a tenacious mud about their heads, which in a short time closed their eyes and nostrils and mouths and compelled them to desist in order to breathe. The exhausted birds then were drawn apart and the mud removed. The fight was over, and the combatants were cut and bruised about the chest to such an extent as to make their recovery doubtful. At any rate, I would be deprived of a bird of burden for an indefinite period; and greatly as Nada-nana disliked to return to the village from which she had come, to accept the hospitality of Kala-pata, she was obliged to turn back and make the best of it.

With her usual gracious consideration for others, she refused to ride when the honored guest of the commonwealth was compelled to go afoot, and having dismounted and given her bird in charge of the groom, she walked along with me as proudly as when we stepped together into the presence of the mighty throng assembled in the Subterraneum Colosseum.

CHAPTER XXX.

Nada-nana wanted me to take one of the two apartments in the house of the governess, and she would take the other, as her unquestioned right as a visiting guest; but I refused to accept any other quarters than the moga stable in which I had been confined the past night; provided, of course, that it should be cleansed thoroughly and furnished appropriately. And Kala-pata, seeing that I opposed the wishes of Nada-nana, of course, sided with me, and two to one, we came off victorious. The stable was fitted for my reception, and I withdrew to it betimes, as a snail retires into its shell, to consider and cogitate on turning the change of circumstances to the best advantage.

Kala-pata evidently manifested a disposition to antagonize and overcome Nada-nana, and was wise enough to see that she could attain her end easily by encouraging my opposition to my official guide, and being as agreeable to me as possible. I was delighted at this beyond measure, and gave her every opportunity of ministering to my wants and wishes, which she accepted smilingly with more and more alacrity, to the greater and greater annoyance of Nada-nana.

This continued until the evening of the sixth day after our return, when the accumulation of little kindnesses and preferences which had been shown me by the woman whom I loved so passionately, became absolutely unbearable; and I was casting about for relief, like a drowning man catching at straws. In the end, at the first opportunity, I ventured to say to Kala-pata that Nada-nana was jealous of her on account of the preference which I had shown her—so insanely jealous, in fact, that she accused her hostess of visiting me in the middle of the night; and that, that very night, she was going to watch for herself and confront her hostess in the awful act.

She accepted the proposition with a delicious relish; and thereupon I proceeded to suggest that if she wished to wring her rival's heart effectually she had only to pass the door of my apartment at midnight and disappear behind the non-luminous walls of the sides and end of the building.

This she agreed to do, with a flash in her eyes and a flush in her cheeks so enchanting as to bewilder me for a moment and make me oblivious to her going away without another word.

How I endured to exist until midnight on the rack of the most passionate expectation, I cannot imagine; but somehow the torturing instants of time succeeded one another until I heard a step approach my open door. I held my breath as it came nearer and nearer; and at the instant the midnight walker was in front of the passage I stepped out and enfolded in my arms the most rapturously beautiful woman the moon and stars have beheld in the eons since the days of Mother Monad.

She struggled to escape with surprising vigor, but in vain; and in a few minutes I had drawn her gently but irresistibly into the very stable where she had treated me so mercilessly and pitilessly and made fast the heavy curtain netting that neither of us could escape without assistance from the outside.

This done, the peerless woman in my arms ceased to struggle and melted into a liquid delirium of acquiescence and enjoyment.

CHAPTER XXXI.

In the morning Nada-nana appeared on the outside of the doorway and Kala-pata on the inside, looking at each other coldly, contemptuously, defiantly and as unforgivingly as only rival women can.

What Nada-nana said first I could not see from my position in the stable, but I caught Kala-pata's reply.

"My associate in the government of Revi-lona will speak the truth. She has seen that I am a prisoner and she will say so. And she will cite the precedent which has been established in her own case, that a prisoner under duress is exempt from the operation of the laws; and my judges will be as just as hers."

This was overwhelmingly conclusive to Nada-nana, I fancied; but I overlooked several circumstances which my keen-eyed governess did not.

"That is all very well," replied Nada-nana severely and sarcastically, "but the honored guest of the commonwealth never tore your garments as they appear before me, nor inflicted the delicate scratches on your bosom which I see, nor disheveled your hair in the manner which I behold. He is too big and strong to overcome a woman with the feeble weapons of a woman. Come out, without another word in exculpation or extenuation—to another woman, at least."

Nada-nana opened the door, and Kala-pata stepped out, holding her hands across the self-inflicted scratches on her bosom, blushing for shame and looking only to the ground.

I attempted to follow, saying as I approached my official guide and companion: "Revenge is sweet," but instead of acknowledging the truth of my remark, she let the curtain fall in front of me and converted my apartment into a prison again, saying: "Not yet, honored guest of the commonwealth—not until the latest of the victims to your licentiousness, instead of vengeance, has had time to make her toilet, comb her hair, repair her gown, put patches on her scratches and fabricate a pretext for having come to you instead of having been overcome by you. Abide where you are until your moga shall have recovered sufficient strength to carry you to a place where you can be liberated with safety, if such a place can be found within the confines of Revi-lona."

I remained in my prison for five days; and in all that time I never saw or heard of the beautiful Kala-pata. Had she been arrested? Had she committed suicide? I could get no reply from my governess; and she was the only person who came to my prison door, to bring me my meals, and let me know that she had not been supplanted in her authority over me, howsoever many were advanced before her in my affection.

At length the day of liberation came, and my governess and I set out for the city on our respective birds of burden—mine apparently as sound and strong as ever; and along we jogged for several hours, conversing very pleasantly about everything else in the world except the missing Kala-pata, until we came to a road which crossed ours at a right angle. Here my bird became unmanagable, plunging from one side of the way to the other and dragging the groom along with him; till, suspecting that his mate had taken that road recently, I shouted to him to be quiet when I meant him to be the reverse; and before Nada-nana was aware of the slightest danger of losing her precious charge again, my groom was sprawling on the road and Hummingbird was going like the wind along the crossroad. I could imagine whither but Nada-nana not—not knowing that my bird was the mate of that of her rival

How many miles my powerful bird carried me I do not know, but enough to put a great distance between my governess and myself and bewilder her as to my whereabouts until after she had signaled from the nearest tower to those in sight; and when my bird slackened his pace in a new village to me and stopped in front of a stable similar to those which I had seen before. I knew that I was an independent being for a night and day at least.

Before I had time to alight I was approached by the governess of the district; and mistaking her, from her size and general appearance, for Kala-pata, I leaped to the ground in a whirlwind of delight and was about to take her in my arms, when I saw that she was a stranger—a very beautiful woman, indeed, approximately the age and weight and shape of my charmer, but lacking something somewhere, somehow which the incomparable one possessed that converted her in an instant from a common clod to a fiery meteor of humanity.

"I beg your pardon; but I mistook you for——"

"You mistook me for my lovely and most intimate friend Kala-pata—how complimentary you are!—and courteous! She has been here, and she has told me all about you—or, at least, she pretended to do so; but she never said a word of your blushing before a woman to intensify a compliment which you have paid her into overwhelming flattery; nor a word of any of the thousand manly things about the honored guest of the commonwealth which I behold at a glance; but she bade me welcome you in her stead, and take the best care of you until her return at the earliest opportunity. So if the honored guest of the commonwealth will accept the hospitality of the counterfeit of Kala-pata, come in and consider your the little world within its walls."

What more could a man that was worthy of the name look for in any of the favored parts of the globe: I went in and took possession.

On entering, however, I observed that the walls inside were not luminous, and having been trapped twice by the entrancing Kala-Pata, I became suspicious at once. I realized that I would not be able to recognize anybody in the dark; and I determined on retiring that if I caught a man in my room in the night I would strangle him outright: or a woman I would leave a tooth mark on one or other side of the neck that I might identify her the next morning.

And when the day dawned I had not strangled a man, but I had made my mark twice.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The governess of the district breakfasts with me; and as she seemed to be in her formal but agreeable manner unconscious of a small but perceptible discoloration on the sinister side of her neck, I was gallant enough not to mention the fact—nor a circumstance of equal significance that a similar discoloration was not to be seen on the dextral side as well.

As a special favor, accordingly, I requested the governess to summon all her attendants that I might thank them personally for the services which they had rendered me in a thousand ways since my arrival; and when they stood before me I failed to find the missing mark—to fill my fancy at once with a flaming conjecture that possibly or in all probability—or in reality it would be found only on the neck of the peerless Kala-pata!

After this little piece of detective work on the sly I expressed a wish to visit the great aviary which was in the neighborhood of the village, as I had been informed casually by my hostess, and an attendant and guide was supplied forthwith by the gracious governess.

The appearanc of my new guide struck me at once, for she was the tallest and the largest framed woman I had seen in Revi lona, about eighteen years of age, symmetric and shapely from top to toe, and clad in blue—a grand and glorious girl in a country of the grandest and most beautiful women in the world. But great as was my astonishment at her body, my amazement was greater at her mind; for she was absolutely unconscious of the fact that she belonged to the same species as the insignificant boys and men of the country, and believed that she belonged to a special kind of organism that was all in all to itself, or woman-kind, let me call it for want of a name; and strangest of all, that I was only a bigger and older girl than herself.

When I realized this stupendous fact I heaved a succession of the deepest sighs, and said to myself: "What next in the infinite realm of the possible in this land of wonders!"

At first she insisted on measuring her height with mine by standing breast to breat and rubbing her head under my chin. Then she bantered me to run a race, and to gratify her I did so, and reached the goal first, but not easily, to her great delight. Then she defied me to wrestle with her; and again to please her I agreed to a single bout, and threw her so quickly and so gently that she was astonished more perhaps than chagrined at her defeat. And finally, on passing a long and wide reservoir of water (which, as I afterward learned, was the bathing-pool of the big birds), she bantered and begged me to engage in a swimming match; but her adamantine innocence and artlessness overcame me, and I positively declined on the ground that my time was limited and the aviary at hand.

A few steps inside the enclosure, I observed several piles of what appeared to be whitewashed cannon-balls of the largest size; and in my astonishment I exclaimed: "And what the dickens are these?" though I suspected what they were, of course.

"Dear me! How ignorant you are, if you are so big! Those are eggs!"

"Eggs of what? Where do they get them.

"Did I ever hear such a silly question? Why, the hens lay them.

"But where do the hens get them?

"I do not know."

"And what do the hens do with them after they have laid them?"

"I do not know."

It was very evident that my guide was absolutely useless to me in my search for information, howsoever agreeable to me otherwise so addressing myself to a long-bearded and intelligent looking man whom I observed in the throng of attendants who had gathered around me in open-eyed and open-mouthed amazement and alarm, I told him who I was and the object of my visit, and begged him to take charge of me and make me as wise as himself in all that pertained to the aviary from the egg to the boneyard of the gigantic birds.

The old mans learning did not belie his appearance; and before I left him I found that if I failed to be as wise as he in the matter of the moga, the fault lay in my stupidity rather than his lack of knowledge and endeavor to impart it to me.

"Before we take a step," the old man began, taking a flexible syringe from his belt, "let me advise you to annoint yourself with this oil. It is a compound of the oils of several of the oldest birds in the enclosure, found in a sack on the back near the roots of the tail feathers. It combines, accordingly, the individual odors of the birds which are familiar to the nostrils of all in the enclosure from the youngest to the eldest; and having it about you, you will be able to go among them as an old acquaintance without danger to yourself and without alarming and endangering them in a general panic. Their sense of smell is keen in the extreme, surpassing that of the most highly developed smellers among our men of science, who are able to compose poems in perfumes and deliver orations in odors."

This was an unmeaning jargon to my big and beautiful companion; but when she saw that I submitted to the anointing squirt without doing more than sniffing at the faint but marvelously complex and significant odor, she did the same, with an additional toss of the head, as if that which was trailing arbutus to me was assafoetida to her; and we began our investigation.

"The female moga lays from seventeen to twenty-three eggs," the old man remarked, as we approached a pile of the whitewashed cannonballs. "They are perfectly spherical, as you see. This permits of the easiest turning and prevents the heavier yelk than the white within from settling to the shell and getting air through the pores and beginning to decompose at once—an obvious advantage in an egg of this size."

"Its expulsion through the oviduct must be attended with greater difficulty, however," I remarked, "that if it were oval or ovoid."

"True; but that is obviated by a trio of preliminary or pullet eggs of as many smaller sizes, which we call quarter-eggs, half-eggs and three-quarter-eggs, which prepare the passage by a gradual expansion. These fractional eggs are infertile, and when you visit the great nurseries of the country you will learn to what uses they are put.

"Originally, or before the domestication of the moga by man, as our men of science believe," the old man continued "the female moga

laid her eggs in the hot sand of the desert and then turned them and rolled them about betimes until they were hatched. She laid them, too, at great distances apar that some of them might escape the better the eyes of animals which devoured them. This is inferred from the fact that the female today never lays twice in the same place; and that if she were not confined in an enclosure she would deposit her supply in as many of the districts of our country as she has eggs. After she has laid an egg now, she leaves it without a thought of looking after it again; for during the ages of the domestication of the species she has lost the natural instinct of the preservation of her kind and in a great measure of herself

"This, before you now, is the substitute of the ancient desert for hatching the eggs," the old man continued as we came to a level plat of sandy ground. "Beneath the surface of this artificial desert there is a network of pipes containing hot water from a geyser on the border of the country, tempered by the distance which it runs to the heat which experience has taught us is the best. The eggs are turned gently half way round, forward and sideways, several times a day; and at the end of the twenty-eighth day the eggs crack and crumble from a seeming absorption and decay from within, and the chicks emerge—these are the color of the sand around them, presumably for the sake of protection; and as soon as they are hatched, they look around and above them, as if they were acquiring a knowledge of the universe at a glance, shake themselves a little, spread their wings and stretch their legs one after the other and then run around in search of food and in play with one another, or scamper off in alarm at the coming of an attendant; for, as far as the necessities of their existence go, they seemingly are as wise at birth as in adult life. They grow slowly and attain their full growth in from thirteen to sixteen years; and when they die of old age they go at sixty or eighty years—the longest life of a moga on record being ninety-seven years."

"And what do you do with their carcases when they die?"

"Boil them; and having stripped the flesh from the bones, we send the former to the silk factories, where it is fed to the spiders as a special seasoning, and the latter to the plantain groves, where they are pulverized and used as a fertilizer of the ground. The feathers of the living birds are plucked at particular seasons, and they are used the smaller for stuffing pillows, cushions and bedticks, and the larger for decorating the bonnets of the governing women of the country. And when a moga meets with an accident or designedly is killed, the skin is used for the heads of drums, tamborines and the like, and the intestines for the strings of our harps and guitars. The flesh is not eaten by human beings, having commonly a little undeveloped egg in it which resists the action of boiling water for a time at least in a mass of meat, and this, when taken into the human stomach, is hatched there and grows to be the most terrible monster which is known to the men of science of Revi-lona—making the man that harbors it, until it has attained its full development, the most miserable of beings, emaciated, discolored, hollow-eyed and pot-bellied, and ravenous in the extreme and causing his death in convulsions in the end. I have seen one of these monsters which was nineteen times as long as the poor man whom it killed—a kind of flat worm, composed of a multitude of segments, with a head at one end and a tail at the other, but which was the head and which the tail I could not determine.

and I doubt if any of the men of science of our country was a whit the wiser."

"You are describing a tapeworm, a monster for a verity, of which several species are known to the men of science in my native country; but what you tell me is especially interesting from the fact that with us the undeveloped tapeworms are found in the flesh of the hog and ox and other beasts which are absolutely unknown to you, and that in the absence here of their special habitats, they have managed somehow to get in turn into the flesh of the moga and the intestines of an unfortunate Revi-lonanian; or conversely, after the destruction of the moga elsewhere on the globe, the undeveloped tapeworms found a vicarious lodgement in the hog and ox. But since you say that the flesh of the moga is not eaten by you, how do the people get the undeveloped tapeworms in their bodies?"

"Betimes our boys and men—presumably because we are naturally more carnivorous than our confined country will permit us to be—crave the flesh of the moga so inordinately that they will eat the half-cooked pieces on their way to the silk factories; and it is among these only that the monster has been found."

"But what about the foods of your birds, the young and the old? Or, rather, the young; for I have learned—to my sorrow—that the food of the old is wholly vegetable and consists especially of the confoundedly thorny little bush of your country."

"In reply to your question, then, I must tell you the most marvelous particular in the rearing of these gigantic birds. The young are wholly carnivorous or insectivorous, eating all kinds of fish and shellfish, the great land-snail which is found in the country, the tupilolo moth and caterpillar, and especially a big earthworm; and when they are very hungry they have been known to devour one another. But the marvelous particular in this is the capture of the large earthworms. They are so extremely sensitive to the footfall or the weight or the odor, perhaps, of a man on the ground above them that they will not come to the surface, where alone they may be caught without unwarrantable labor. Accordingly, they are trapped in the following ingenious manner. After a plantain grove has ceased to be productive the stocks are cut down and laid in rows along the ground—this vegetable being the principal and favorite food of the big worm, which, however, will eat any kind of plant. Over these rows, then, are stretched ropes from one end to the other; and on these ropes are suspended movable cars or big baskets. In these men are placed with long hooks and pole-nets and other special appliances; and as the movable cars are drawn back and forward along the stretched ropes by men stationed at each end, the men in the cars capture the worms when they come to the surface to eat the plantains—but not without exercising the most consummate skill in the use of their several devices—a skill which only the tactile class among us can attain after a special training from boyhood to adult life. We endeavor to keep a stock of these great earthworms alive at all times on account of the difficulty and the uncertainty which are encountered in their capture; and if you will step this way I shall take pleasure in showing you what we have at present."

"Ugh! The horrid things!" exclaimed my big and beautiful companion, with a toss of her head and the compression of her nostrils when the curtain was removed from the door of the great vermicula-

rium (if I may be permitted to coin a word), and we looked upon a myriad of twisting and writhing worms of a brownish color, from five to ten feet in length and ranging in thickness from my wrist to my thigh.

"Come, let us go," said my companion, backing away from the interminable entanglement as it seemed to me to be of headless boas and anacondas; "for I am sure that we have seen everything that is to be seen here. At any rate, I never was so tired of anything in my life; and the strange and disagreeable odors are almost unbearable!"

It was far from the truth that we had seen everything that was to be seen in the vast aviary; but we had seen enough for one day, so thanking the little old man for his courtesy and complimenting him and the other keepers on the approximate perfection in which I had found every department of the great establishment, I joined my big and beautiful companion who impatiently had gone a dozen paces or so toward the gate of the enclosure.

On our way back to the village, my companion betimes seemed to be lost in meditation, and when I rallied her about the great change that had come over her since our setting out—no longer a romping rollicking girl who would race and wrestle with the fullness of new vigor and vitality, but a pensive and modest maiden, she replied with a naivety that was as effective as charming to me: "A great change has come over me indeed; and I do not understand it. Here, an hour or so ago at this reservoir I would have engaged in a swimming match with you in a tempest of glee; and now I would not disrobe before you for the world. Then you were a bigger and a stronger playmate; now I know not what—a something that repels me and yet attracts me irresistibly. I want to run away from you, and at the same time I want to rush into your arms and lay my head upon your breast."

"Well, my dear girl, I will explain the matter to you as well as I can. You are becoming aware that I am a man and you are a woman."

"I do not understand you."

"Well, as among the mogas which we have been investigating there are some that lay eggs and some that do not."

"And will you run around and lay eggs like one of our big hens?"

"Oh, no, my child."

"Then, will I?"

"Not exactly, but——".

"Well, what? You promised to explain the matter to me."

"I find I cannot."

"Then a greater change has come over you than me. When you were talking to that hideous little old man your lips moved so rapidly that I could interpret their meaning only by the closest attention; now they are as motionless as fallen leaves in water. Come, set them in motion again, please; for if they were not made for conversing, what in the world were they made for?"

"Come closer and I will tell you—closer—closer—there, for kissing and imparting to an ignorant and guileless young woman the rudiments of knowledge by which in time she will learn the difference between a man and a woman."

"Well, I have been at school all my life, but it seems to me that I have learned more in that single kiss than in all my schooling. When will you give me the next lesson?"

Oh, Brigham Young! Oh, Sultan of Turkey! Oh, King of Daho-

ney! Oh, Solomon of old! Ye have had vast and varied experiences with woman-kind, but severally and collectively, ye have never been in Revi-lona or the like thereof!

"My dear girl, I cannot say; for if I mistake not I see your mistress, the governess of the district, on the top of the signal tower, and she is warning me to hurry back and mount my moga and get away as fast as his legs can carry me, lest my official guide and governess, who is approaching the village, take me in charge and confine me, perhaps, as a wild beast in a stable for a week or two."

"But, dear me! You are not afraid of any governess of the country, are you? You, who outran me and threw me so easily, the swiftest and strongest of all my playmates? Who is she that is so powerful?"

"Nada-nana, my dear."

"Pooh-ooh-ooh! She is high in authority and the strictest of disciplinarians, but she is not higher than you, is she? While she is not half as big. I could carry her about in my arms as I pleased, I am sure; and if you do not make her go back to her own district and mind her own business, I will never speak to you again—never!"

"How, then, will you get your second lesson?"

"I was not obliged to speak to get my first."

"You are learning, but there—there—your mistress will see you and never forgive you—there—I must be off."

"And I will do nothing but cry till you return, you big, big coward! And I know not what besides that makes amends for your cowardice a thousand times over."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

I found my big bird ready for me on my return, and when I approached him, he sniffed at me familiarly and permitted me to mount him without the slightest resistance—indeed, without heeding me in the least; but when I endeavored to urge him forward he would go but a step or two and then stop and look around him in confusion. At length I shouted in his ear, but the sound of my voice, instead of making him run with affright as before, served only to surprise him the more.

Here was an unforeseen obstacle in the way of my scampering off at pleasure, and seemingly as inexplicable as insurmountable. At length, however, as Nada-nana became distinctly visible in the distance from the top of the tower and as I was at my wits' end to know what to do, my big and beautiful guide approached me sobbing and blubbering as if her heart would break, suggested that the moga was confused by the compound odor which my garments diffused around me, since my anointment in the big poultry yard. The solution of the mystery was as patent as day then, but what to do I was perplexed as badly as before.

The governess came to my relief then, saying in a commanding way: "Get off your bird at once, and go into the house with this biggest of my attendants and exchange your robes for hers—her garments will fit you as well as your own."

The big and beautiful girl, as in duty bound, obeyed her mistress, of course, while I was too confused to resist; and how long or short

a time it took us to make the exchange proposed I do not know. I was oblivious to time, but when we got out of the house I found the governess was in a rage and looked daggers at my big and beautiful companion, who, instead of blubbering, was blushing—possibly at her appearance before her mistress in a man's apparel, but in all probability from a discovery which she had made recently that obviated the necessity of going to school any longer.

I mounted again, but fared no better than before in inducing Hummingbird to go; and again the big and beautiful girl approached and reminded me that her clothing had been perfumed in the poultry-yard as well as my own.

"Then get down again and come into the house and exchange with me—my garments are free from the confounding—and confounded—odor," the governess said in a still more commanding way.

And I really believe—for I had no way of determining the fact accurately—that it took the governess and myself a longer time to get out of our own and into each other's garments than it did her maid and myself; and when we came out of the house, she was purple with rage, possibly with increasing perplexity at the fact that the approaching Nada-nana could be seen now from the ground where we stood; but in all probability from a change in her from a suspicion to a conviction with respect to her predecessor.

Howsoever, with a chuckle in my sleeve at the chances of war among women as well as men, I mounted my bird for the third time, and having taken in my hand the halter-thong, without a word, the mighty moga started at a bound and was off at his usual speed.

And in due time, as usual, I was taken to the stable door of the governess of a new district; and to my relief I found the governess a woman of sixty-five at least—a beautiful old lady, with a benignant face, and the most charming of gentle and persuasive manners.

To my relief also I found the walls of the inside of the house luminous, and after a sumptuous supper, I went to bed and slept not only through the long night, but also late in the morning—with nothing to disturb me in the least, save the fact that my aged hostess looked on me neither as man nor woman, but as an abnormally overgrown boy, or a kind of monstrous booby—a something to be petted and pinched and patted and paddled, and bade me come hither and then go thither, and commented on favorably and unfavorably without reserve, in accordance with her momentary moods and whims, and with no more regard for the feelings of the subject in hand than if he were a figure of dough.

I could not comprehend this at first, but when I learned that one of the great nurseries of the country was in her district, and that for many years she had been at the head of the board of managers of the vast establishment, in which thousands upon thousands of children had been reared from birth to adult life, I could understand in a measure at least, the treatment which she accorded me regarding me as I said before, a bigger boy than she had ever seen and nothing more.

It was not surprising to me, accordingly, when, after breakfast, the old lady informed me that her duties called her to the big baby farm and school, and as I desired, I either might accompany her and see how much bigger I was than any boy or girl in the establishment or stay about the house and play with her maids until her return.

I chose to accompany her, and after a short walk, we entered a spacious enclosure, and at the same time the infantile department. Here

to my infinite amusement and amazement, on a great level area of warm sand, I saw hundreds of babies, some lying on their backs and kicking up their heels, some rolling and tumbling about, or tugging at one another in play and others sleeping in divers attitudes; by far the greater number, however, with the end of a little tube in the mouth sucking something of a fluid nature contained in the great globe-like egg shells of the moga!

My amusement and amazement at what I saw, however, were lost in a greater surprise when I learned that a mother in Revi-lona never suckled her own child, and rarely another's; and that by reason of the system which had been in vogue for ages in the country, the breasts of a mother seldom contained sufficient nourishment for a babe, and generally a quantity of milk so inconsiderable as to be disregarded. This gradual diminution of the natural supply of infantile nourishment was concurrent with the increasing use of the eggs of the moga as a succedaneum, until the latter had supplanted the former almost entirely—the exceptional flow of mother's milk, when it occurred, being given to babes in feeble health rather as a medicine than a food.

All the infants before me were round and rosy females; and after a while I observed a number of attendants go among them and test the quantity of the contents of the eggshells by lifting them or hefting them, as they say in the backwoods of Pennsylvania; and when they found them deficient in weight, they carried them to a hydrant of warm water and having filled them with warm water, they carried them off in the direction of another plateau of sand in the distance.

I wondered at this, and the good governess condescended to explain the matter to the visiting boy from another part of the world.

"My dear child, these are the superior sex of Revi-lona, by whom the country has been preserved for ages; and these eggshells, when they were placed here, contained their natural contents, boiled to a certain degree and stirred about till the yelk and white were mixed thoroughly in a homogeneous fluid. They are taken away now after they have been emptied in part, from a half to three-quarters or more, and filled with warm water; and as you see, they are carried away to another little desert of sand. There the babes belonging to the inferior sex are kept and fed with the diluted beverage."

"And accordingly," I added, "the female infants of Revi-lona are plump and fully developed as I behold these babes before me with pleasure, and grow to be the most magnificent women of the world, while the males are feeble and stunted, from an insufficient supply of food, and are never developed to their full stature and manly powers."

"Not exactly, but they are fed a sufficiency to envelope them in the several ways they may and must be useful to the community. Ages ago, when our country was greatly larger than it is at present, our men were bigger in bulk than our women, and, in some respects, superior to them; but as our country contracted the big men exterminated themselves in their incessant warfare. The biggest of our women then got the control of the community, and have kept it ever since by keeping the men as you see them today, smaller than the women, and always in subordinate places."

"But certainly, from such superb mothers physically their sons betimes must resemble them—be big babies at birth and develope naturally in despite of adverse circumstances."

"It is hard for a seed to grow into a tree under a stone. The boy babies generally come into the world bigger than the girl; but through

our system of subsequent feeding, training and employment they are suppressed in stature and warlike spirit, while they are expanded and developed in other ways more useful to the commonwealth. Occasionally, however, a boy developes into a man above the average in size and strength."

"Well, and does he not transmit then his superior stature and power to his sons?"

"He never has a son."

"Why?"

"You must ask the Controller of the Population of Revi-lona. She will tell you. I cannot—it is not within the compass of my cares and duties. Now, if you please, come along. I must look at the boys as well as the girls, and see that they are as they should be in every respect."

To my agreeable surprise I found the boy babies healthy and happy, but far from being so round and rosy and rollicking as the girls.

"I see here that you separate the sexes at birth. Now do you keep them apart in their development and education ever afterward?" I inquired, turning with a smile to the grand supervisory mother of the great nursery.

"And I see, my child, that you are like the most of the children, continually asking questions and giving me no peace until they are answered—or spanked. The sexes are kept apart from birth to death as much as possible. And as there is no relationship known among us—no little family in the big family—there is no tie stronger than that to the commonwealth; and we have had little difficulty lately—not to mince out the centuries—in suppressing the natural instincts which attract the sexes to each other and bring about little communities here and there, of father and mother and children and children's children, with different manners and customs and rules and regulations, to the utter demoralization of a big community, with uniform laws and equable duties and deserts."

"But you have fathers and mothers and children among you. How do you prevent the development of the little community or the family in the big community of the commonwealth or state?"

"A very natural question, and the Controller of the Population is the only person in the country who can answer you fully and show you how the fact is accomplished. Suffice it here, the father and mother of a child are blindfolded when they are brought together, and consequently they are never able to recognize each other. The child is taken from the mother at birth, and neither ever knows the other. In fine, the children among us are the children of the commonwealth, knowing neither father nor mother, sister nor brother and recognizing none more nearly related or more closely connected than another; and from birth to death all receive equal care and consideration, albeit developed variously to qualify them the better for the several vocations, as the different parts of the human body are differentiated in their growth without the disparagement of any to subserve the common end of maintaining the whole. But to the matter directly before us—the boy babies are kept here only during the time they must be fed with the diluted contents of the eggs of the moga. After the egg period, if I may term it so, they are taken to another district and fed on other food, as you will see doubtless in your tour of inspection."

From the infantile department, then, we in succession visited all

the divisions of the great school to the highest in which the girls were fully developed women of seventeen years of age or thereabout, as the governess informed me. The method of teaching in all was a combination of physical and mental exercises in which a certain movement and a certain idea were put in correspondence or recognized relation, rendering one intelligible from the other. This, as it seemed to be in general; while it was complicated in the extreme and might have involved other methods which escaped my observation. Howsoever, I was interested most in the highest school. Here, in squads of sixteen and companies of sixteen squads, the young women were engaged on our arrival in what appeared to me to be a complicated drill movement, but which in reality was a combination of calisthenics and mathematics, in which not only simple sums in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division were done, but also complicated problems involving fractions, the extraction of square roots and the like. They represented the five class—or special sense divisions of the people at large; and in their gowns of the five class-colors, they presented a beautiful spectacle on the great campus between a little city of buildings in which they ate and slept on the one side and a vast reservoir of water so clear that the sinter sides and bottom of the artificial lake could be seen through it on the other. At length an end came to the educational parade on the austral field of Minerva, and the grand supervisory mother of the establishment, having posted herself at a particular point on the side of the little lake, with her big booby charge at her side in such apparel that he might be mistaken at a glance for a visiting governess, the whole battalion of young women came in squads before us, and with the precision of automata, doffed their garments, threw them on a pile and popped into the water—world of Venus!

I had seen on several occasions during my long voyage on the ocean, porpoise after porpoise to the number of several hundred leap above and dive beneath the surface in a complicated series of successions—at one time, in the golden glitter of a setting sun after a showery day, which enhanced the beauty of the scene a thousandfold; and I thought of these marvelous exhibitions of graceful motion by the fishlike mamals of the deep; but they were as one to a million in comparison with this grand display of a battalion of the most beautiful young women in companies and squads in the lovely lake!

This was a part of their schooling, too, and neither a frolic nor a hygienic measure; for while they physically were swimming and diving in the water, they mentally were singing a song in praise of the beauty of duty in suppressing self for the preservation of the commonwealth.

I could have listened to this paean forever, I believe! but the time had come for the good old governess to go home, and I must follow in my leading strings.

It was well, too, that we returned when we did, for in casting my eyes along the road which I had traversed the evening before I espied a familiar looking bird in the distance and ran to the stable to get out Hummingbird at once.

But the good old governess opposed my running away with a remonstrance, then with a command and then with a threat of spanking if I disobeyed her; and not wishing to incur her displeasure by disregarding her wishes and authority, I caught her up in my arms, as a

big boy might take his little grandmother, and kissed her over and over again, till she bade do as I pleased in order to get rid of me.

"Yes, go where you will and when you will, you rude and unmannerly overgrown boy; but, my child, take the best care of yourself and come back to me soon—for somehow I like you better than all the boys whom I have raised—you are the only one that has dared to kiss me!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was evident that somebody in authority was managing my tour of Revi-lona, and I suspected Kala-pata but I could not divine her motive satisfactorily. It was in great part, undoubtedly to spite Nada-nana, but that would not be a sufficient cause for leaving her district and publishing her intimacy with me among her associates. She, too, might have fallen in love with me, but that would not solve the mystery, for if she loved me she would want to monopolize me and not hold me in common with Fan, Nan, and Hannah. Well, well, let the secret be as it may, thought I in conclusion, as long as I am infinitely freer and happier than I would be with the severe Nada-nana, it would be foolish in me to find it out, and in doing so perhaps put an end to my travels in another stable jail.

I found my next hostess an extremely vain and haughty woman and more exact in the discharge of duty and observant of form and ceremony than the exemplary Nada-nana.

She stood as stiff and erect as a flagstaff at the door of the government house, and made no sign of recognition of my presence until after I had put Hummingbird in charge of her attendants at the stable and approached her, bowing repeatedly until I came into the range of her vision at a distance of ten or twelve feet from her stately stiffness; then moving her lips without changing the icy expression of her face, she said: "I, Lulu-mama, as I have been tattooed and registered officially, the governess of the district of Tapa-tula, of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona, welcome the honored guest of the commonwealth to my district residence. Enter and by and with the authority which hereby I extend to you, order, command and enjoy within the limits of the law of the land But first, honored guest of the commonwealth, let us understand each other I am too haughty to be a hypocrite and too proud to consent to be the catspaw of another. When, accordingly my associate in the government of Revi-lona, Kala-pata, as she has been tattooed and registered officially, invited me to entertain you, I consented, as in duty bound. Thereupon she began to impose a condition when I declared the interview at an end—my pride in the discharge of my duties as a hostess or otherwise in my own district not permitting me to learn the purport of her condition How-ever, she excited my suspicion, and now that you have come, unaccompanied by your official guide and companion, the beautiful and dutiful Nada-nana, as she has been tattooed and registered officially, my suspicion has been confirmed that there is a secret agreement between you and Kala-pata to meet here for some purpose unknown to me, and being unknown to be avoided as vile among frank and honest people. If so, honored guest of the commonwealth, remount

your bird of burden and go back to your official guide and companion at once. The governess of the district awaits the reply of the honored guest of the commonwealth.'

"The honored guest of the commonwealth," I replied, "is delighted to meet the exalted governess of Tapa-tula and proud to say that he had made no agreement with Kala-pata, or anybody else, to meet here or elsewhere. I am free to say, however, to the high-minded Lulu-mama that I believe Kala-pata is instrumental in my coming hither, but how or why or to what end I do not know; for there is no understanding or communication between us. I despise a hypocrite too, for I am big enough and strong enough to be self-reliant without assumption."

"We are friends, then. We appreciate the exalted sentiments of each other (literally the mountain heights of each others character), and we may trust each other implicitly. Enter."

I entered and found perhaps the most perfect apartments in all their appointments which I had seen yet; and after supper I was left alone to retire when it pleased me to do so in a room almost as light as a summer's noonday from the luminosity of the walls; and it is almost needless to add that my sleep was unbroken during the night.

At sunrise, however, I was awakened rather rudely and tumultuously I thought at first by the beating of a drum under my window, but on reflecting that the attendants of my high-minded hostess must be as discreet as herself, I concluded that the summons was executed in a most praiseworthy as well as proper manner. By the beating, too, I not only was aroused, but also informed that my hostess desired me to accompany her to a particular place at a particular time to see something so surpassingly wonderful that she neither could name it nor describe it.

After breakfast, accordingly, we set out, the proud and naughty governess on her mount led by a neatly dressed groom, with the pompous strut of a bantam cock, and I afoot: for knowing too well that Hummingbird would travel in one direction only, I refused to make an attempt to mount on the ground that, mounted like herself, I might be mistaken in her district as an equal in authority with the governess; and that it was enough to satisfy the honored guest of the commonwealth that the exalted Lulu-mama condescended to ride by his side and officiate as his cicerone.

At a distance of only a mile and a half or two from the village we came to the volcanic borderland of the country, and the cultivated fields terminated abruptly against a desert of desolation, which, I must confess, with its associations, had little attractiveness to me.

Presently, after passing a number of sulphur sinks and feeble fumaoles, we came to a vast boiling cauldron of a milklike fluid. Here, stopping her bird at a safe distance from the brink, the governess said:

"This is the largest of the volcanic kettles from which for ages the material has been obtained for the construction of our roads and houses, our sewers and bridges and, in short, all our structural works. The supply is inexhaustible, but variable somewhat in consistency and what is deemed remarkable also about the seething cauldron of sinter is the fact that it has never been known to overflow by any accumulation within itself or sink to a lower level by the abstraction of any quantity of the fluid at a time. Is it not wonderful?"

"It is surpassingly wonderful and well worthy a visit around the world afoot, if that were possible."

The haughty woman smiled as I said this, and the instant the rigidity of her features was relaxed, I observed with surprise that she was a very beautiful woman, and as winsome as well, beneath a superficial varnish of repellant severity.

"You may say so now and truly; but it is absolutely nothing as a wonder to that which I will show you in due time."

And again the haughty woman smiled and became lovelier by a degree at least and more attractive.

We resumed our way into the wilderness of wonders, and a mile or so from the great sinter cauldron the governess dismounted from her moga, saying:

"Farther than this it is unwise to take the bird, lest she become alarmed and run away. Accordingly I shall leave her here with her groom and proceed afoot with the honored guest of the commonwealth."

"And I sincerely trust as his equal here in the wilderness where none can see and the laws of Revi-lona are of no more validity than the laws of the United States of America."

"Pardon me for contradicting you, no; the governess of the district of Tapa-tula is the embodiment of the laws of Revi-lona, and wherever she goes she carries with her the laws of her country."

"I beg leave to differ with the high-minded governess in her maintenance of an unlimited right of extraterritoriality in Revi-lona that might extend to my native country; but no matter now—we shall travel hence as friends, I believe, if not as equals."

"We set out as friends," my companion responded promptly, with a succession of smiles that made her absolutely charming.

At length we came to the foot of a symmetric conic hill about a hundred and fifty feet in height and from base to apex a marvelous succession of sinter terraces, composed of cup-like receptacles of infinite size and shape and of the purest white, gleaming like a mountain of diamonds in the sunshine. I recognized it at once as the sinter cone of a great geyser; but in the general regularity involved in the infinity of irregularity, it exceeded so far any conception I had of a product of a geyser, that I stood before it in ineffable astonishment, spellbound, silent but expanding and contracting to the utmost with the pleasurable emotions which were excited within me.

"It is as beautiful as wonderful, is it not?"

"It is a marvel of loveliness, indeed, and—I can say nothing more."

"I regret to hear you say so, for this is as nothing to that which I will show you by and by." And in saying so amid her smiles, with a flash appearing in her eyes and a flush in her cheek, the proud and haughty governess became absolutely fascinating.

Presently a rumbling as of summer thunder was heard coming from the ground beneath our feet and around us. This was followed by a shaking of the ground which alarmed me greatly, but had no effect on my companion further than to induce her to say:

"You are in no danger here; but perhaps you would be more comfortable and enjoy the spectacle of an eruption of this grandest of our geysers at present from a greater distance."

I acquiesced in the suggestion of my most agreeable companion now, and removed to the summit of a neighboring knoll of an unknown kind of earth (rhyolite, possibly), of a purple color, like haematitic clay.

The subterranean thunder and the quaking of the earth increased until finally, in a culmination of both, a succession of pearly lustrous cannon balls of water shot out of the summit of the sinter cone and chased one another rapidly to the height of the Washington monument; but one, the central, however, attaining the highest point; the others bursting betimes in their ascent and disappearing in the rapidly increasing cloud of steam that followed close behind the cannon balls of water, and completely hid the descending shower from view—the gleaming apex of the boiling column remaining an impression on the retina of the eye for a longer time in reality than at a certain altitude in the air.

This eruption was followed by a second, third and fourth, at regular intervals, but with gradually decreasing force and volume till a fifth was aborted in a gust of steam; and the spectacle was an amazing phenomenon of the past—to be repeated, however, indefinitely in the future, morning after morning, as it had been for many years.

The enormous volume of water carried up in the several cascades of explosive balls descended amid the steam in showers which could be heard but not seen, and poured down the sides of the great cone from one zone or terrace of cups to another in an infinity of sparkling rills and waterfalls which were less imposing in their effect than the great eruptions but more beautiful—a stupendous fountain of glittering gems!

"The wise men of Revi-lona," the governess at length remarked, "have calculated that the point of water in the first of these eruptions attains a height above the summit of the cone of four hundred feet generally, and six hundred feet occasionally, as I think from my familiarity with the great geyser it has done today. Aand that the eruption from beginning to end is more wonderful and beautiful than anything you have seen yet, surpassing far the great sinter cone and very far the boiling cauldron of milky sinter, I believe you will admit freely, honored guest of the commonwealth."

"And such models of symmetry and beauty as would enrapture a

"I am speechless, my dear governess. I cannot say a word. I am overwhelmed with the inexsuperable spectacle."

"I regret to hear you say so, honored guest of the commonwealth; for I have something still to show you which in my estimation is the inexsuperable spectacle of the universe; and I shall be disappointed greatly if you cannot find words to rave about it after you have seen it.'

"Reserve it then until another day that I may come fortified to behold it; for, believe me, my dear governess, anything more sublime than the stupendous eruption which I have beheld would strike me dead at your feet!"

"I will risk your demise without the slightest flutter of apprehension. Abide here on this spot for a few minutes, with your eyes fixed on the terraced cone in front of you, until I tell you to turn—and die if you can or will.'

She said this with the most bewitching of smiles and warmth of feeling that converted her instantly into another enhancing Kala-pata: and I stood awaiting my death with the immobility of Ajax in powdered tights defying the lightning.

Presently I heard a nervous clapping of hands behind my back, and turning deliberately to meet my doom as became a hero of my magnitude, I saw the governess in a glow of glorification beneath a

woman's hat so nearly like the one which I had found in the drawer beneath my bunk in the whale ship that I mistook it for the identical piece of feminine apparel from my native land!

There is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, has been said ten thousand times, but never more truthfully and appropriately than on this occasion.

I did not die—I did not sicken so much or so little as to lose my wits for an instant; but I should have done so, perhaps, for the display of vanity before me was a spectacle, time and place considered, the most extreme the world has seen to my knowledge.

"You are right, my dear governess," I exclaimed with enthusiasm. "You have reserved the superlative for the last. But the longer I look at you the less able am I to determine whether you are the more becoming to the hat or the hat to you. I think, however, if you will allow me to suggest, the effect of your long blue gown detracts from the sublimity of your imperial face beneath your dazzling diadem."

"That is remedied very easily."

And in about the time it takes me to tell it the sash or waistband of the governess was cast aside and the shoulder fastenings of her gown were undone whereupon the gown, in a series of encircling folds and pleats, slid down over her body and the ultimatum of woman's vanity was before me!

I think the proud and haughty woman wore the hat for fully an hour, before removing it from her head to admire it for half an hour longer in her hand; and during this time I flattered her vanity so successfully that she declared over and over again that my judgment was infallible; that I had more appreciation of what a woman should wear than all the women of Revi-lona put together, and that I was the dearest and sweetest man in the world—so sweet that really she thought that she could condescend to kiss me.

This I refused to permit until we had been placed on a footing of equality; and to this she acceeded as nothing more than fair; and in a moment or two my blue gown was lying by the side of that of the governess.

And aside from her all-involving vanity, I found Lulu-mama an agreeable and entertaining hostess—a scum of ice on top but——

"But, my dear governess, you have not told me how this hat came to be secreted here?"

"Dear me! I would be doomed to death if it were found in my possession in Revi-lona! The materials of which it is composed—the straw, the ribbons, the feathers, the colored balls and beads and the patches of colored silk—were brought here, and the hat was made here, and when I wish to wear it I must come here to do so."

"Then this region is beyond the limits of the laws of Revi-lona, and the governess of Tapa-tula does not carry the commonwealth on her back when she crosses the border of her country?"

"Yes, I confess I was too quick to decide against you to see that in doing so I convicted myself; and I am satisfied now that you are right that when we are beyond the jurisdiction of the courts of Revi-lona, we may do as we please with impunity. Another kiss, if you please, you sweetest and wisest of men that ever lived; before we go back to th horrid country where to love is to compass the destruction of the commonwealth."

On our way back the groom led the bird of the governess afar

in advance; while the governess condescended to walk by the side of the honored guest of the commonwealth—as vain and proud and haughty, perhaps, as when she set out, but infinitely more charitable and considerate to the frailties of others, and liberal in her construction of the laws of obligation and duty.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Would the charming governess of Tapa-tula, the incomparable Lulu-mama, detain me to have me fall into the hands of the severe Nada-nana? No? Then command your grooms to release their hold of the halter strap on my bird of burden and hand it to me."

The command was given with a sigh and a starting tear, and away went the honored guest of the commonwealth on his feathered charger, Hummingbird—who in the wide, wide world beyond the confines of Revi-lona could imagine whither!

In the usual time, however, I arrived at a similar station to the preceding in my grand tour, and found the sixth of my hostesses to be a superb woman with unbounded confidence in herself. She met me with a smile of satisfaction and assurance, saying:

"My associate in the government of Revi-lona, Kana-pata, when she advised me of your coming, suggested that I might be embarrassed in receiving into my house and entertaining as my guest over night a man! Think of it. But when I reminded her that before I became a governess I served for several years as the inspector of the men of Revi-lona, she had nothing more to say, concluding wisely that I was familiar enough with the weaker sex to be mistress of the situation under all circumstances. But do not assume, honored guest of the commonwealth, a timidity and backwardness which you do not possess—come in and be at home in every sense of the phrase. For I have penetrated your disguise—Maro-tino knows a thing or two and what you are as well as yourself."

Nevertheless, I found my apartment darkened, while that of my confident hostess was luminous; and after I had made my toilet for supper, the superb woman resumed the revelation of her marvelous prescience with respect to my real nature and character, saying:

"As soon as you came into the harbor in your big boat and the people began to describe you as bigger than any of the noble women of Revi-lona and style you the most marvelous of men and the like, I began to suspect what you were in reality; and after consulting the records in the office of the inspector which contain descriptions of all the remarkable men and women of our country for ages past, and finding that the rarest of the anomalies there was not a bearded woman——"

"But, my dear governess, you certainly do not mean to say that you imagine or believe that I—am not a man?"

"Oh, do not be uneasy, honored guest of the commonwealth, I would not betray you for the world. You are here under my rooftree, and your secret is as sacred as your person. And besides, I would not rob myself of the ineffable pleasure and satisfaction which I feel in being the only woman in the country with a woman's eye in her head to see without a complete reversal of vision in your case."

"But, my dear governess, you must permit me to deny and protest against such——"

"Not a word, honored guest of the commonwealth. As I said before, I will not betray you for the world. But some day when we shall be dead and gone the fact will be made manifest; and the records will contain their most remarkable case of deception and delusion. So, come along to supper, where on account of the attendants we must change the subject of our conversation.

Of all the extraordinary attributes accorded to me yet, this seemed to me at first to be the most unreasonable; but upon reflection, in view of the disparity between the men and women of Revi-lona in the eyes of the superb inspector, and the fact that bearded women were not unknown in the curious annals of my own country, the mistaken conclusion of the governess appeared to be within the bounds of the possible, if not of the probable; and I confess that I was annoyed as well as amused in its contemplation.

During our repast, however, I observed the governess inspecting my hands and wrists and arms over the table, and not without a percentible agitation, I fancied and a subsidence of the flood of her spirits; and on our return to her official residence, she said to me rather abruptly:

"Come into my chamber, honored guest of the commonwealth, where it is light, that I may compare your hands and wrists and arms with mine. There"—extending her right arm toward me—"there is a woman's arm."

"And as nearly perfect as ever graced the faultless form of a woman,' I exclaimed in admiration, with dissimulation. "But, my dear governess, before instituting a comparison you must bear in mind first that I am bigger in bulk than you by a half or more, and that my arm is proportioned to my body; and second, that from my earliest years in my native country, I have been a boxer and wrestler which has tended to enlarge the bones and sinews and muscles of my arms from shoulder to finger-tip, while you have never moved a muscle save in gentle sport or the like."

"I will make every allowance for size and use."

I then raised and extended my arm by the side of hers; and the difference was so apparent in contour, proportion and texture that when I let mine fall to my side I concluded that the exhibition was over and my manhood established to the destruction of the most deeply rooted conviction.

I was surprised, accordingly, when the governess remarked with visible excitement:

"I am not satisfied!" Then grasping the front of her gown with her two hands and pressing it against her legs, she raised it until her feet and ankles and a dainty bit of her shins above could be seen by herself as well as by me. "There are a woman's feet and ankles."

Some such models of symmetry and beauty as would enrapture a Titan or a Rubens! But my dear governess, if you will consider again that I am bigger than you in every way and that from my childhood in my native country I have been a football player and a sprinter of some note for a heavy-weight, I will oppose mine to yours."

"I will make every allowance."

I stood in front of her accordingly and made a display of my nether extremities; and as I glanced from mine to hers I marveled

that they belonged to the same species of plantigrade mammal, so unlike were they in their external characteristics.

"Your feet and ankles differ from mine—greatly, it is true; but how or why—or in what—but—there are a woman's calves and knees."

"And indescribably lovely, in perfect harmony with the ankles and feet beneath. Every curve a line of beauty and the combination of curves one of the masterpieces of nature in vital architecture. And you still will make every allowance?"

"Yes, yes, certainly. I am becoming impatient."

I then exposed my bulging calves and big knees, with their prominent muscular attachments, and before I had time to formulate in words the dissimilarity between the opposing pairs, the excited governess gave another hitch to her gown, saying:

"There are a woman's thighs."

"Yes, I see; but I am speechless. There, however, are a pair to match them.

"Yes, I see; but—I am trembling all over! For what an awful dilemma I would be in if you should not be a woman after all!"

"True, true, my dear governess, but you vowed again and again that you would not betray me. Now, I beg of you in all fairness, do not condemn me with a doubt."

The trembling woman took another reef in her skirts. I did the same. And the moment I did so, the unmatchable governess fell in a faint; and so suddenly that I barely caught her in my arms in time to save her head from striking the sinter floor.

I then laid her on her bed, and after pumping the blood from her body into her head by raising and lowering her arms I soon restored her to consciousness, but never more to confidence in the infallibility of her foresight. No encouragement on my part, however, would induce the fallen one to rise; and I spent the remainder of the night in calming her agitation and vowing never to betray her to her associates in the govrnmnt of Revi-lona, especially Nada-nana and Kala-Pata.

And all this without interruption until about dawn, when I was aroused from a dreamful doze by the form of a woman entering the house and going directly into my apartment; and as she came out I caught a glimpse of her face and recognized in the mysterious visitor the fascinating ignis fatuus that was leading me on and on from one adventure to another—and nearer and nearer the awful Arch of Justice, with its horrible funnel above and its equally horrible well of boiling water below! The peerless Kala-pata! I endeavored to seize her, but before I was aroused fully she was gone; and I was left in doubt whether I was in pursuit of a reality or a creature of my imagination

Howsoever, after breakfast, accompanied by one of Maro-tino's attendants—a big, good-natured simpleton, who conducted me like a child taking a stray Newfoundland dog to a neighboring millpond—I visited an extensive pottery near the village, where almost everything hollow was made from sewer-pipe to cups and saucers.

From what I know of the Revi-lonian mode of constructing houses, arches and enclosures of all kinds by a kind of wattle-and-daub process or wickerwork-and-plaster, if you will, I had surmised how cups and plates and such open-mouthed vessels as goblets, pans and buckets were manufactured—simply by coating with sinter basket-like frameworks of plaited grass and willow; but I was puzzled effectually to conceive how bottles and jugs and demijohns, with big bodies and little

necks were made without containing any internal framework as I had discovered from observing a number of broken vessels. They were not turned on a lathe like our jugs in Pennsylvania, nor were they blown like our glass bottles. That was evident from their want of perfect symmetry; while in every respect, save that of posessing no framework, they were identical in texture and finish with the other manufactures.

When, however, I beheld the simple process by which the apple got into the dumpling in this case—or the hole in the body and neck of a bottle, I left the factory at once, lest my lack of invention might subject me to the ridicule of the workmen.

First, a ball of twine was made as large as the inside of the bottle required, and approximately the shape; the twine being wound as in the balls used on the reaping machines in America, that it might be unwound from the center. Then the unwinding end of the twine being held in the hand of the manufacturer, the ball was plastered with sinter; and after the coating has been hardened sufficiently by exposure, the twine was drawn out, leaving the walls intact. Afterward a tube the desired length, shape and caliber was placed over the orifice which had been left by the string and enlarged to the necessary size; the neck and body were united by the same material of which they were composed; and the mystery of making a bottle in Revi-lona was an amusing puzzle of the past.

The sinters from the thousand and one geysers on the confines of the country were believed by the potters to differ from one another, and from the experience of ages, they had learned the kinds that were the most suitable for their business—some being too friable, some too brittle and others lacking one or other of the essential qualities; the favorite being of adamantine hardness and of a rose-petal pink in color. And in order to effect the finest finish or that of a rose-colored pearl, the ware was taken to a certain geyser and alternately dipped in the boiling water and dried, as many times as would be necessary to attain the perfection desired; each dipping leaving on the ware an infinitesimal coating of the mineral substances which were held in solution in the wonderful water.

This process was applicable only to small objects, such as toilet mugs and table ware. The grand vases which, perhaps, were the highest evolutions of art in the country, were painted by hand by a number of women who belonged to the visual or purple-gowned class; as indeed were all the people employed in the pottery

CHAPTER XXXVI

The seventh of my hostesses, Rata-tini by name, was a veritable aspen-leaf of timidity, embodied in an exquisitely beautiful young woman, with finely chiseled features, drooping shoulders, delicately molded arms and wrists and tapering fingers as pink as a babe's. She kept at a distance from me—aloof, without avoiding me; and while she trembled in my presence, I was not long in observing that she was fascinated with me.

Betimes I endeavored in one way and another to induce her to approach me of her own accord and touch the fearful but fascinating monster before her; but I could not prevail on her to touch the tip of one of my fingers which I extended to the utmost toward her. Finally I laid my head down on my crossed arms on the table before me and pretended to doze and in a short time I felt a trembling finger touch a straggling lock of my hair; then a delicate hand invade insinuatingly my hirsute crown, sending a thrill of pleasure through me from head to my heels; and I imagined I was a big Numidian lion lying asleep in a cage, and the lovely woman stroking my mane between the iron bars. I next felt a set of dainty finger-nails scratching my head; and I imagined forthwith that I was Bully Bottom and she Titania with her attendants. Until familiarity with the monster having robbed him of his terrors, I suggested the convenience of laying my head in her lap that she might scratch with one or both hands the more easily and satisfactorily, and continue to do so until doomsday; for if I was partial to petting in any form more than another, it was in having my head scratched by a woman whom I affected

Toward midnight, however, this became monotonous and both of us intolerably sleepy; and how I passed the remainder of the night I cannot say; but at breakfast I observed a faint discoloration on the right side of the neck of the gentlegoverness and looked in vain for another on her left.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The eighth of my hostesses was as nearly indifferent to me as it was possible to be while I was in the circle of her vision; regarding me as she passed and repassed in the discharge of her duties as a Pittsburgh lady might a boy-built snow man in a park, melting into slush in the spring. I studied her for several hours to discover an assailable point, and gave up in despair. Finally, on catching a glimpse of her shapely ankle as she swept by me, I ventured to remark:

"Pardon me, my dear governess, but I cannot refrain from informing you—if you are not aware of the fact already—that you possess the most perfect instep and ankle I have seen in Revi-lona, the country of the most beautiful women in the world."

She paused, but took no further notice of my remark.

"When I saw you first I observed your stately carriage of course, and as a student of anatomy I inferred that your shoulders, hips and ankles must be in a perfect alignment with one another, and the arch of the instep an acme of architectural evolution in the human body. And by the way, my dear governess, the spring of this arch, as the source of grace, of moving in a series of curves, concurrent and intersecting, involving every part of the body and in their complexity affecting that real but intangible charm of all charms to things animate and inanimate in motion—the source of grace, when seen in its perfection is a subject for consideration as well by the wisest as the most aesthetic of mankind."

She continued to pause, and betimes she straightened herself and adjusted the poise of her head with the nicest precision. In fine, the fish played with the bait, and in the end was caught on the hook concealed within it.

And speaking of a fish reminds me that the following morning this exceedingly indifferent personage had become interested in me to such an extent that disregarding a slight ecchymosis over her right carotid she accompanied me to the great inland fishery of the country, where the supply of the peculiar fish which was fed to the silk-yielding spiders was obtained from a subterranean lake of hot water.

I found the only access to this lake to be a circular sinter-lined opening about forty feet in diameter, around which to prevent the fishermen from falling in, had been built a wall of sinter about two feet high, and on surveying the surroundings of the well, I observed that it was in a great depression which constituted a different watershed from any part of the country in which I had been, and that topographically it belonged to the borderland of Revi-lona rather than to the oasis proper in the great volcanic wilderness. Looking down into the well I saw that the water rose in it to a point within ten or twelve feet of the surface, and that it was of a deep blue color. I supposed from the water-level that the crust of the earth over the subterranean lake was only ten or fifteen feet in thickness; but I was informed

by the fishermen that the walls of the well were unbroken for a depth of about twenty times their stature, a hundred feet; and that the land on which we stood had sunk into the lake ages ago to a certain point and there remained, and in doing so still lowered the brim of the still more ancient geyser orifice to the water and raised the water toward the brim. At any rate, the conditions as I found them had been substantially the same for centuries

The object of my visit having been told to the fishermen by the governess at her command, they prepared to cast their net and make a haul for my special benefit. The net was circular in shape, and having been drawn over the mouth of the well and a series of weights attached to it, it was lowered by means of long ropes to a depth of over two hundred feet. Then the bait was lowered, apparently to me a stone of a hundredweight attached to an unnecessarily thick rope—and a stone tied to a cable it was, but both had been made as luminous as possible with the phosphorescent paint of the country, and the light was the essential part of the bait—as a similar light, I have been told, is the allurement of a number of deep sea fishes.

I was amazed at this, to the amusement of the fishermen, one of whom remarked to me that I would be astonished infinitely more when I found that the fish caught by the peculiar bait were eyeless!

I could not credit this, of course; and believing that they were chaffing me with a fish story of a proverbial character, I said:

"It may be so, at any rate, I am prepared to find every anomaly and contradiction in a country where the men wear the gowns of the women and crawl around like half-crushed beetles beneath their feet."

Happily they did not comprehend this remark, and to anticipate the haul of fish I found in due time that the fish in question were eyeless in so far as nothing remained of an atrophied organ of vision save a blackish spot, which I presume was a vestige of the retina and still affected to an attractive degree by the actinic rays of light. At length the bait and net were drawn up together, and when the catch became visible in the bag of the net, the part of the net which had been drawn over the wall around the opening; was made fast with the singing stones. Then ten or more of the fifty men who were required to raise the net, took up each a peculiar scoop attached to a long pole like a bamboo, and began to dip down into the water to capture the fish singly or in pairs.—the scoop being a sieve or colander near the top and a bucket beneath; so that when the fish were brought out of the well they were still in hot water or their natural element.

The fish then were lowered into tanks of hot water at hand, and by an elaborate arrangement of canals and lifts, which resembled somewhat the shadoof of the Egyptians they were transferred to an elevation, not only above the rim of the great lake basin, but a hundred feet or more above the general level of the oasis of Revi-lona, whence in pipes they were floated alive to the several parts of the country in which they were required as food for the people and especially the spiders. The difference between the lift of the Revi-lonanians and the shadoof of the Egyptians being that a basket in the former took the place of a bucket in the latter, and a separate receptacle containing the fish in hot water was passed from basket to basket by the Revi-lonanians, while the Egyptians raising water only poured the fluid from one bucket to another.

On examination I found the peculiar fish to be without any means

of defence and I concluded that its struggle for existence did not involve an offensive or defensive warfare of any kind. I found also that the inside of its mouth was plated with bones; and I inferred from this that its food consisted of one or more kinds of shellfish which inhabited the bed of the lake—the shellfish probably finding their sustenance in one or other kind of vegetable growth there; and the latter getting their aliment from the several elements contained in the water. I observed, moreover, that the backbone of the peculiar fish did not terminate at the base of the tail fin as in the familiar sucker and shad of Pennsylvania, but extended to the tip of the upper part of the tail fin; and I concluded that the Revi-lonanian eyeless hot-water fish was a species of shark, having some affnity with the Port Jackson shark of Australia.

The catch which I observed contained several hundred fish the largest being about eighteen inches in length and the smallest ten or twelve; and they were exceedingly sluggish in their movements.

But the most extraordinary thing about the little hot-water shark was the fact that it became cooked in a few minutes on being exposed to the atmosphere, or in a little longer period on being cast into cold water. This I presume was on the principle that intensely cold iron burns as well as hot; and the relative temperatures of the hot water in which the fish lived and the cool air to which it was exposed was probably the cause of the culinary phenomenon. But not being a man of science I suggest rather than say.

In cooking the fish for the table, accordingly it was necessary only to remove the viscera in the hot water in which the fish was swimming when it was brought into the kitchen and serve it spread on a platter at once, the roasting, broiling steaming or whatsoever the operation may be termed being effected in the passage from the kitchen to the dining-room—even the seasoning of salt being obviated by a succedaneum in the crumbling bones of the peculiar fish.

And here, in passing, I may say that fire being absolutely unknown in Revi-lona all the cooking was done either by boiling or steaming or this special mode of preparing the little hot-water shark for the table, by aeration.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The ninth of my hostesses was an old maid of thirty-eight or forty, who affected to be fifteen. She was a remarkably well-developed woman, however which made amends for her youthful if not childish behavior—betimes peeping round a corner at me with a gleam of merriment in her eye and then running away at my slightest movement. She also had the curious childish habit of expressing herself by contraries, saying: You must not do this or you must not do that, when in reality she wished you to do the reverse—thus evading responsibility.

Her capture, accordingly, I thought would be only a matter of a little time. I must sit on my chair quietly; and by and by she will get into a corner, saying: "Now you must not catch me here for the world," something of the kind, when, of course, that would be the end and aim of her peculiar maneuvering.

And at length she did get into a corner, saying: "I shall be frightened to death if you dare to come near me," and fixing my feet firmly under me to catch her at a bound, I attempted to spring and fell back on my chair; for the playful child of thirty--eight or forty summers had prepared the seat beforehand for the catastrophe which I have related by daubing it with the tenacious glue of the country.

The old girl, holding her sides, laughed at the success of her trick till the tears trickled down her cheeks and not a little chagrined at being made sport of in a manner so childish. I braced myself for another attempt.

The venerable trickster was on the alert, however, and fearful of the result of another effort, the instant I moved, she darted out of the door and around the house, and down the street and around several houses and in and out of several narrow passages, till I lost sight of her I, of course, having left behind me on my chair a considerable part of my noble blue gown.

Happily this occurred after all the good people of the village had gone to bed and were sound asleep within the four walls of their houses; for otherwise, the governess would have been scandalized. Happily, too, I found my way back to the house of my hostess and went to bed—reserving my vengeance until I might have an opportunity to wreck it; for neither high nor low could I find a trace of the kit-cat that night.

In the morning I found a new robe in my room, and at breakfast I met the governess of the district, so demure and so discreet that I bowed in homage to the proficiency which she had attained in the art of dissimulation.

I had my revenge, however, before I left her. When she entered the tower to ascend the narrow spiral staircase to the signal station atop, I followed, and she was obliged either to leap from the summit to escape or surrender.

She preferred the alternative about half way up the staircase.

Afterward the happiest woman in the world conducted me to the large snailery or cochliarium in the neighborhood of the village, which was one of the most important establishments in her district.

The species of mollusc which was grown here was not like the common snail of Pennsylvania, but similar to a species which I saw at Para in Brazil on my way from the United States to Peru—or Chili, where I stopped—and which I believe the surgeon of the ship called bulimus. The shell of this Brazilian species was about five inches in length and the animal as big in bulk as a dozen common oysters. The similarly shaped shell of the Revi-lonanian species, however, was from eleven to fifteen inches in length and the animal which inhabited it a monster of a mien so frightful as to put to flight not only the four and twenty tailors of the nursery legend, but all the tailors of Christendom.

The flesh of these large mollucs supplied the infants of the country with the greater part of their food, after they had ceased to suckle at the spheric breast of a moga's egg.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The tenth of my governing hostesses was a woman of the highest intellectual order a poetess of celebrity in the little world of Revi-lona.

I was not aware of the fact when I met her, and how I discovered it I scarcely can say. She had large eyes a dreamy look and a subdued spirit, it is true; but on the other hand, she was one of the grandest women whom I had seen in Revi-lona, beautiful, well-developed and majestic; while all the female writers of verse whom I had seen in America were skinny and scrawny, with heads too big for their bodies, more or less hysterical and far from beautiful.

Indeed, I did not know that there was such a thing as poetry in Revi-lona (except in the form which I have described in the account of my visit to the school for young women), although I had heard many expressions which I regarded as poetic, and I could not conceive of poetry without meter and rhyme, which it necessarily must be in the language of Revi-lona, which was without sound and without accent but not without a certain rhythm or secondary movement in addition to the primary of utterance.

Howsoever, in the course of our conversation after supper I learned from my grand hostess that poetry was beautiful thoughts expressed in beautiful language, and especially thoughts which have been evolved from the feelings, or emotions—the deeper, the truer, the tenderer, the nobler or the sublimer the feelings the better the foundation for the superstructure of poetry, but not to be confounded with it.

By way of illustration she took my right hand in hers and grasped it firmly; then placing the finger-tips of her left hand against my forehead, she said by pressing them gently in a significant alternation and succession: "If the women of your country transcend you in grandeur as the women of Revi-lona exceed the men in size and development what words of mine can express their mountain-like magnificence!"

"That is all very well as far as it goes," I replied. "The idea is beautiful and the expression is beautiful, but where is the feeling from which the idea has been evolved?"

"At the center of the world of a woman's heart."

"Then there are love and vanity in you as the ruling passions, in despite of a suppression for ages through untold generations?"

"No, vanity has the first place and love the second, for vanity involves only the individual, while love includes another and expands into the preservation of mankind."

"But why in the expression of this feeling did you put your hand in mine?"

"Because I could not put my heart in yours."

"You strike like lightning.'

"I and my mothers before me have waited for ages for the opportunity."

"Then let me recite a line of poetry according to your definition—a beautiful idea expressed in beautiful language."

"I shall be delighted to hear it."

"Make hay while the sun shines."

"But I do not understand it. What is hay?"

"This—this, my dear governess,' taking her in my arms and kissing her again and again, till she declared that the poet who had composed the line was as sublime as the man who had repeated it was superb.

And somehow, the following morning I was sleepy; but after breakfast my poetic hostess, having promised to take me into the environment of her inspiration, I went with her drowsily, and after a dreamy walk entered a vast field filled with enormous puff-balls or a kind of fungus or mushroom similar in shape and appearance to the vegetable white bread of my native state, but vastly larger—some of them being as big as a bushel basket.

I expected, of course, in the company of the incomparable poetess, to enter a garden of roses that would surpass all that has been fabled of the fields of Cashmere; and when I found that her inspiration came from a vast environment of vegetable white-bread, I was inclined to think that what I had accepted as a poem of the highest merit was in reality but an evolution from one of the mammoth puff-balls about me.

The poetess, however, divined my thoughts from the expression of my face saying:

"No, my dear hay-maker, when the sun shines and when it does not—these mushrooms are one of the Revi-lonan substitutes for mother's milk—being fed to our infants betimes from their birth, along with their eggs and snails, till they are able to eat a more substantial food; and here a woman, with the instincts of a woman still in her heart, will feel as a woman and think and express herself as a poetess betimes on her suppression for the sake of the commonwealth of Revi-lona. The bosoms of our mothers should feed their babes, not these mushrooms; and our fathers should be giants not pygmies.'

"Treason!"

"It may be. But since I have entered what the laws of my country consider a career of crime and put in jeopardy my existence by loving you, why should I balk at treason?"

"My dear governess, I am neither a poet nor a politician. Let us go home—and make hay while the sun shines."

CHAPTER XL.

The eleventh of my hostesses was curious to know all about the women of America, and how they managed to squeeze themselves into the small garments which had been exhibited by the cunning Nada-nana as some of the many marvels that had come from the big world beyond the icy barrier in the marvelous boat of the most marvelous of men; for she, like most of the governing women, imagined that in size and consequence the women of my native country must bear the same relation to the men which they did in Revi-lona.

"I have been dying to see you and have a talk with you by myself," she remarked with enthusiastic frankness; "and I shall never permit you to get out of my clutches until you have satisfied my curiosity. Indeed, I scarcely can wait till you have entered my house to——do tell me, please, before you go a step farther, where do the women of your country wear the peculiar article of dress which you call a bustle" And why? And, dear me! Now that I have begun, I do not know whether or not I shall live long enough to come to an end!"

She remembered everything that she had seen and heard on the interesting occasion of Nada-nana's return from the ship; and she declared repeatedly that she learned more from me in a minute than she could from her associate in a month. Moreover, she accused my official guide and companion of being the most selfish woman in the world, and too mean for anything, in remaining on board so long and keeping all her knowledge of my wonderful stock of apparel to herself.

At length, satisfied in a measure with respect to the complicated investure of the women of America, she wanted to know whether or not they were as beautiful as the women of Revi-lona, and whether or not they governed their big country as well as the latter did their little; and in what kind of houses they lived; and on what kind of bird they rode in their traveling from one district to another; till I began to wonder, too, whether life would be long enough for me answer all her questions.

And thus till about midnight, the inquisitive woman continued to be curious about woman-kind to the exclusion of the inconsiderable remainder of the universe which included the weaker sex of Revi-lona, along with such minor matters as a masculine waif from the other side of the globe. Then, suddenly, in a kind of flight out of herself and her surroundings, like a startled bird escaping through the open door of its cage, she became conscious of the fact that the honored guest of the commonwealth was not a woman and that somehow he must spend the remainder of the night in the same house with her; and heigh-ho! She was in a flutter of excitement and bewilderment in an instant.

"Calm yourself, my dear governess," I remarked placidly, "for I observe that the apartment across the hall is as dark as my understanding at times. I will go thither; and as I pass out of your sight I doubt not I shall pass out of your mind."

"Oh, dear me, no! For then I shall not be able to see you, while you can stare at me till you are tired! And I see now very clearly what I suspected when Kala-pata suggested the propriety of darkening your chamber—she wished to catch me in just such a predicament as this. But I am not to be caught so easily. I will accompany you, honored guest of the commonwealth, that neither of us can see the other in the darkness."

CHAPTER XLI.

The next four of my hostesses were physically and mentally very dissimilar, but not very remarkable as captures by the hawk among the doves of Revi-lona.

The first was a malingerer of a simple type with which to deal, affecting to be suffering from injuries which she had received from a fall from her bird in the great panic on the wharf of the harbor. And after repeated examinations I failed, of course, to find any dislocation, bruise or impairment of any kind in a well-developed woman physically, but mentally a little weak—resorting to the guile of a simpleton to attain her end.

The second was in reality an intellectual woman, but curiously evasive of expressing herself individually or directly, employing fables and proverbs with a positive primary meaning and a conjectural secondary interpretation; keeping me in a constant uncertainty as to her exact intent and understanding.

The third was an intensely emotional woman, without a pendulum to regulate the paroxysms of her feelings; unless the shedding of tears be accepted as such; for after weeping she was as composed as a geyser after an eruption.

While the fourth was a gossipy woman—her mind a kind of mirror, reproducing everything she say and heard—a mirror, however, not of the most perfect glass, but warped considerably by vanity and envy. Had it been possible to repeat in the course of twenty-four hours all that had transpired in Revi-lona since my coming, I think I would have had it tipped or lipped or tapped into me in one way or other Kala-pata's conversation with her was reproduced, as the gossipy governess avened, from a to izzard; but I could not solve the mystery of her actions from any of the statements of my avant-courier.

The sixteenth of my hostesses, however, was a philosopher of rare comprehension in a woman—especially a woman of consummate beauty in the perfection of health. Her calm consideration of the consequences of my visit to Revi-lona made my blood run cold; and whether or not the commonwealth would survive the shock was a problem in her mind. My mode of traveling from district to district, with Kala-pata in the van and my official guide, Nada-nana bewildered in the rear, excited her gravest apprehensions. She disapproved of it and condemned it as dangerous in the extreme; in as much as the breaking down of the barrier between the sexes in any part of the country or among any class of the people and especially among the rulers of the country, was subversive of the government. She wished, however, to have with me an interchange of philosophic views on the all-involving

subject. She wished, moreover, to come within the circle of my influence as a fully developed man of ideal grandeur, that she might feel the fact which she feared in order that she might formulate her opinions in the future from her experience, rather than her perspicuity.

In fine, she was walking on rapidly melting ice, as I perceived; and I concluded that it would be infinitely easier as well as more delightful to fish her out of the millpond of overwhelming emotion than to philosophize with her till the ice beneath her feet should have become firm again.

And at length the catastrophe occurred as I had foreseen it. The superb woman, in despite of her big brain, was a woman still—the flax of philosophy, or anything you please, until the fire approached the flame!

CHAPTER XLII.

The seventeenth of my hostesses inspired me with awe when I confronted her; for without haughtiness without vanity, without pride, without affectation and without assumption, she was a natural ruler of mankind, governing by the force of her character, which was expressed within the comprehension of all in her imperial post.

She seemed to me to have the head of Napoleon set on the body of Venus of Melos; and while she was not as perfect in the symmetry of her form and in features as the heroic Nada-nana, she was more imposing and persuasive as an embodiment of power. Her texture, too, was not as fine as that of my official guide, nor was she the possessor of a feeling as deep or a will as determined; but she resembled Nada-nana more than any other woman whom I had seen in Revi-lona—somewhat taller and heavier, and with less action, but differing from her as iron from steel or linen from silk.

"Welcome, honored guest of the commonwealth. I am proud to greet you; for you are the only human being I ever have seen with whom I willingly would share my power and command. While I am the governess here you shall be the governor, and were I the queen of the country you should be the king. Enter the house with me side by side. That is your apartment and this is mine. An open passage between, but honor needs no wall!"

The profound respect with which she treated me kept me at a distance; and there never was a chamaeleon that took the color of his surroundings more completely than I shaped my manners and my speech after my imperial hostess.

After supper her rigidity relaxed a little, and after remarking that she had awaited my coming not without impatience, for she was anxious to learn something of the presumably larger countries than Revi-lona which existed in the great world beyond the icy barrier that lay between it and their little austral oasis, she begged me to give her a brief account of what I alone could tell her.

Accordingly I told her of the great powers of the earth, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Germany Russia and China; and of the great rulers, Washington, Queen Victoria, Napoleon and the emperors and empresses of Rome and China. She listened with an eager-

ness, an enthusiasm and an understanding that interested me intensely in my subject for her sake; and after I had made an end to my relation, she remarked with a complacent confidence in her ability to rise to a commanding eminence in any country that overwhelmed me, that, if she were in the big world, she would be either the Queen of England of the Empress of China, or die in the attempt!

"But by what means would you make the attempt? I queried to get an insight into the working of her wonderful brain.

"By the means which I employed in becoming one of the Twenty-five Governing Women of Revi-lona—by growing naturally into the greatest governing woman among them; and then by appearing among them and making the fact felt among them till my competitors stood aside and I was left alone, a self-elected governess. Napoleon, you say, by the means which were embodied with him, rose from the ranks of the people to be the Empeor of France; I by the same means might become an empress of the grandest empire of the globe; and if I failed it would not be for want of aim and endeavor.'

"But if your ambition in the big world would induce you to strain every effort to become an empress, why are you satisfied in Revi-lona to be one of twenty-five instead of one alone?"

"I may be that in reality now."

"But how?"

"By being the ruler among rulers, the leader whom all follow in times of danger, the one whom none opposes. To be the one by name, the queen or the like—the end is not worth the effort. The country does not admit of expansion. As it has been it must be maintained and continued or not at all."

"Then you were the head and front of the opposition of your people to my landing and the instigator of the efforts which were made to destroy me?"

"I was.'

"Then why did you make a treaty with me and permit me to become the honored guest of the commonwealth?"

"Because during the conflict I learned that, aside from your marvelous boat and more marvelous weapons of war, you were a man of majestic mien and incomparable power; and that I wanted you."

"For what purpose or to what end?"

"To share with me the glory of being the Head of Humanity in this isolated region of the globe; or you the man-half and I the woman-half of the real government of Revi-lona. I am weary of walking alone."

"But, my dear governess, how can that be without——"

"It is, now. I am where my power and authority are; and while you are in Revi-lona, I am at your side, the happiest of women."

"That may be in theory or in fiction, as they say in law; but would it not be more agreeable to have me by your side in fact?"

"The law forbids."

"But you are the embodiment of the law, and as you will, the law declares."

"You are wise. The laws of Revi-lona are suspended. Sit closer."

And there was an interregnum of anarchy in Revi-lona until after my departure from the ambitious Ean-toma: but happily there were only two individuals who were aware of the fact

CHAPTER XLIII.

When my big bird carried me away from the grand embodiment of unbounded ambition, and while I still felt the persuasive influence of her imperial presence, I fancied there was not another woman in the world to attract my eye and excite my heart to the point of pursuit with a thrilling expectancy to a final capture. But I reckoned without mine hostess number eighteen, the romancist, Mati-pana.

Of medium size and weight, with large, liquid brown eyes, an abundance of brown hair and a mouth of marvelous beauty and attractiveness, in symmetry and sweetness of expression, in color and contrast, and the thousand and one things appertaining to a perfect man-trap, baited and set, and warranted to kill with every closure in a kiss—with these several physical peculiarities, she seemed to belong rather to the purple class of the people of Revi-lona than the blue like Kala-pata, and was all the more winsome to me for her departure from the standard types of the country.

How she greeted me when I dismounted I cannot say—I was surprised and confused too much by her charming person and manners, in the midst of her attendants; but how she welcomed me within doors I can state positively from the deep impression which was left in the wax of my being, was with the closure of her marvelous man-trap in a delirious kiss.

In any other of the enlightened countries of the world the beautiful governess would have been a writer of romances or a novelist; but in the isolated oasis of Revi-lona, where expansion was impossible, a change of conditions undesirable and dangerous and contraction and continuance the rule, her essential individuality as a story-smith was suppressed, along with her natural instincts as a woman, but happily not anihilated.

"How glad I am to see you!" she exclaimed, in a transport of joy after we had had supper and were seated side by side in her cozy apartment, like a happy boy and girl in an interchange of secrets in the innocence and confidence of childhood. "And how glad I am to see that you surpass in size and strength and sweetness the ideal man of my dreams by night and my fanciful fictions by day. Now, never breathe a word of it to a living soul and I will tell you what I imagined just the week before your marvelous ship came into the harbor of Revi-lona, and the marvelous man and his still more marvelous weapon of war became known to us as frightful phenomena, like earthquakes, storms and volcanic eruptions.

"Well, I imagined that once upon a time a strange leaf, sere and brown, attracted my attention by circling in the sky over my head until descending spirally, it fell at my feet. I took it up and examined it with great care, for I had never seen the like of it before; and I was about to take it home and preserve it as a wonderful waif from the outside world which had been brought hither by the all-enveloping winds, when I observed a series of little holes in the leaf

which seemed to be significant of human thought from their peculiar arrangement. I studied them for a long time and finally I interpreted them to mean: "Feed me to your favorite bird of burden, Kama-lolo." I did so, and immediately the wings of the bird began to grow and continued to enlarge in every way until her appearance was changed completely, and she became possessed of the power of flight to a marvelous degree. I was astonished greatly at this; and curious to experience the new sensation of traveling in the air like a conscious cloud, I mounted the bird and bade her fly whither she would—the farther the better, even to a circuit of the globe; for I longed to see the whole world and ascertain if possible if among the millions of mankind which were supposed to exist in divers regions of the earth there was one man——now, remember, you promised me and sealed your promise with a kiss, that you would never breathe a word of what I tell you to a living soul!—well, to see if there was a living man in the wide, wide world whom I could regard without abhorrence, touch without a shudder, honor without humiliation and love to the satiety of a yearning heart, without fear and in defiance of all the prohibitory and condemnatory laws of the universe. There, now, a kiss for a colophon; for I have concluded a chapter.

"Well, my big bird went up as the strange leaf had come down, in a spiral course; and at length, when she had attained an altitude so great that the country of Revi-lona seemed to be simply a greenish spot in the middle of a boundless bowl of ice she darted off in a straight course, and kept it till I fell asleep, and how much longer I cannot tell; for when I awoke she was standing under a strange tree eating the leaves and fruit. I dismounted and walked about to ease my cramped limbs. Then feeling hungry I ate of the fruit of the strange tree, and found that it was both meat and drink; and very nourishing and refreshing. This done, I remounted Kama-lolo and set out to explore the country and inspect the people. I found the former to be very large and filled with an infinity of strange plants and animals; while the latter were a myriad of little commonwealths (families) of savages, of a reddish color, with curly black hair and the most monstrous mouths imaginable. They went about naked, and the women were no bigger than the men and hideously ugly; and which were the superior in power, the females or the males, I could not determine.

"In disgust and disappointment I got upon the back of my bird again and bade her fly to another country, and when she alighted I found that I was in a semi-civilized country, where the people were of an orange color and wore bandages about the middle of the body, and the men were larger than the women and, greatly to my surprise were the governing or superior sex. I was mortified at this discovery, feeling myself humiliated in beholding the subjection of my semi-civilized sisters and I left the country with a delighted spirit as if I had escaped the chains of slavery.

"The next country was civilized and the people of a yellow color, wearing garments that seemed to be composed of a series of bandages of different colors around their arms and legs as well as the body. And here, too, to my horror, I found that the men were larger than the women and in control of the government; and yet there was none among the men who in form and feature was pleasing to me or whose presence in private was endurable. I remounted Kama-lolo, accord-

ingly, in a state of dejection, and flew away as fast as the wings of my bird could carry me.

"The fourth country was half enlightened and the people of a purple hue, wearing garments somewhat of the shape of our own, but most fantastic in bright coloring and elaborate ornamentation. I was interested intensely in the houses and works of art of this strange people; but I could not abide in the beautiful country nor hope to find the object of my search among the men, for while they were shapely and even handsome in person, they were insignificant in size in comparison with myself and tyrannous in the extreme over what they affected to term the weaker sex.

"I still expected to find another country and another people besides the four which I had investigated; for according to our scheme of humanity, there are five great divisions which are simply the ultimate expressions of an innate tendency of the human body to differentiate into fives in its peripheral or terminal development—five fingers, five toes, five senses and the like. Accordingly while I was disappointed and dejected as a result of my experiences so far, I did not despair, but hopefully looked forward to find a man that would come up to my standard among the inhabitants of a fifth and final country. I mounted my bird, accordingly, and bade her fly; and in due time I alighted in a lovely country where the enlightened people were of a bluish color and larger and more comely than any that I had seen before; but unhappily for me, the disparity between the sexes was still greater, the men individually of a size and strength that fell short of my standard somewhat, and as domineering as slave drivers, while the women were considerably lower in stature and less in bulk, and as submissive to the will of their masters as our little children are to their teachers. I pitied my unfortunate sisters from the bottom of my heart, but I could do no more. I had come on a special mission and I must go among the men and capture one that realized my ideal and carry him off with me to Revi-lona. At length I found the biggest man in the country—a handsome youth, a year or two older perhaps than myself and a hand's breadth less in height; and I invited him to get on the back of my bird behind me and I would make him the better half of a governess in a perfect paradise of the earth from which I had come. But the man turned up his nose in a contemptuous refusal, saying: 'No; but if you will sit behind and let me sit before, I will take you on the bird to the house in which I live and make you my slave and feed and clothe and shelter you for the rest of your life in return for your services as I may order and direct.' My blood ran cold when I interpreted the alternative of the domineering monster, and having tossed my head, that I might look over him as something beneath my further notice, I went away. A second choice of mine made me approximately the same answer: 'I would not sit behind another man, much less a woman.' A third declared: 'I am old enough and big enough to take care of myself, and make a paradise for myself wherever and whenever I please. A fourth that it is bad enough to have a cabman under my arm, but on the top of my head intolerable.' And so it went on until my heart began to fail me; until finally I saw a big, fat, good natured man in tattered garments sitting in the shade of a tree, with a number of implements lying at his feet. I approached him and made the same proposition to him which I had made to the others; and he

accepted, saying: 'I shall be happy to go with you anyhow and anywhere. Please assist me to rise and get on the back of your bird; for it is a little more than I care to do, to do it all myself.'

"I was humiliated, of course, by this confession of laziness and dependence; but I felt bound in honor by my proposal to him, and having taken him in my arms I set him on his feet. I then attempted to put him on the back of my bird, but Kama-lolo, not being bound with her mistress, would not permit him to approach her, and finally kicked him over. And so she dealt in succession with all the men who agreed to go with me; and in the end I was satisfied that my bird was wiser than myself in rejecting all who would submit to the domination of a woman; and unless I decided to remain and become the slave of an undersized master I must return to Revi-lona as I came. Accordingly I mounted Kama-lolo, and as if she divined my mind from my actions, away she flew and in due time I dismounted at the door of my residence—a wiser but a sadder woman for my experiences in search of an ideal man among the millions of mankind in the wide, wide world.

"There, that is the end of my story, and a kiss for a colophon is my due; and unless you give me another I will not relate to you the sequel."

The kisses were given, and after their bewildering effect had vanished, the imaginative Mati-pana resumed her story.

"Well, the following day after my return from the outside world I was engaged in feeding Kama-lolo out of my hand when the feathers, one after another, began to come out of her wings and vanish as they fell to the ground; and as they did so I noticed that they came out in the peculiar order of the little holes in the sere and brown leaf which had descended from the sky, and I interpreted them to say, over and over again, till the last feather had fallen and disappeared. 'Go to the tower of Marco and look.'

"So I mounted Kama-lolo and rode to Maro, and day after day I went to the top of the tower and looked in every direction. At length I observed a speck against the ice along the horizon, and as I watched it, it grew in size and seemed to approach the mouth of the harbor. I kept my eyes fixed on it continually, and as it came nearer and entered the harbor, it became bigger and bigger, until it stopped in the middle of the circular bay, a marvelous apparition of unimaginable import!

"I was excited greatly at the sight of the prodigy; and by chance pressing my arms against my bosom I felt my heart beat strangely in accordance with the peculiar succession of holes in the sere and brown leaf and in the falling out and vanishing of the feathers of Kama-lolo's wonderful wings; and paying particular attention to the pulsations, I was able to interpret their import clearly: 'It is the wide, wide world coming to you, and bringing the man of all mankind to fill your eye and enrapture your heart. Keep your secret. Wait, wait. Patience, patience.'

"Accordingly I went down from the tower, and while the people were panic-stricken I was calm; and while they said the stranger was a monster with one red eye and one green, who darted deadly lightning from the end of a stick and thundered with his mouth, I kept my secret; and while they attempted to kill the monster in one way or another I shuddered, but patiently waited.

"And that is the end of the first chapter of the sequel. A kiss, please, or you will never hear the end of the story.

"Well, I waited and I had patience until I have exhausted my patience and can wait and keep my secret no longer. The man came ashore—the man of all mankind to fill my eye and enrapture my heart—the man surpassing in a thousand ways in fact the ideal man of my limited knowledge and feeble fancy—the unimaginable man until seen and kissed ten thousand times——"

"Well, why do you not go on with your story? This monster of a man came ashore, and then what did he do?"

"Do you not know?"

"I am not telling the story."

"Well, I will continue. This monster of a man came ashore, and in due time came to see me, and when I intimated to him that I could not encompass his magnificence within the limits of my imagination until after he had kissed me ten thousand times, he was mean enough and provoking enough not to take me in his arms and begin to kiss me and continue to kiss me, and say betimes between his kisses: 'That is the most delightful story that ever I heard or shall hear if I live to be as old as the oldest of the tortoises of Revi-lona, and retain the vitality and vigor of my early manhood to the last!'"

And the succeeding chapters of the sequel of Mati-pana's story are inseparable from my own.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The next five of my entertaining governesses were very unlike one another and their predecessors, the result of a continuous differentiation in their development from generation to generation under the most favorable circumstances of growth to divers forms of organic life, as evidenced in the extraordinary bulk of the puff-ball and plantain among vegetables, the snail and the spider among the invertebrates and the tortoise and the moga, the representatives of the vertebrates, along with the Revi-lonanians. The first was a seemingly semi-transparent woman of the most exquisite beauty and a delicate and strangely diffusive refinement, suggesting shadow fading into light or water passing into mist and vanishing in mistiness. She interblended with her environment so perfectly that it was difficult to determine where the woman ended and the sky began above her, the earth beneath her feet and the Paradise of Revi-lona around her. In fine, to such an extreme did she pass from a visible person into an invisible presence that I could taste the sweetness of her lips before I touched them with mine, and interpret the secrets of her heart from the passing of its pulsations to the atmosphere around her. I regarded her betimes as a governess of gossamer; but that conception was applicable only to her visible filmy form, fading into the invisible; and the only phrase that I could conjure up that would encompass satisfactorily her lovable and loving nature, concentrated and yet diffusive, intense and still melting into mildness, was delirious deliquesence.

The second was a venerable dame, who, like the Hebrew Sarah in her old age, was a personification of the legal mixim, **Qui facit per alium, facit per se**—the principal acts in his agent. She was so feeble

and uncertain in her movements—in a great measure the result of the fright in which she was and the tremble and the trampling which she got in the panic on the harbor wharf—that, for her comfort and safety, she was obliged to have an attendant with her at all times, and fortunately her favorite was a lithe and supple young woman in an orange gown, as sharply cut in form and feature as a silhouette, with flesh as smooth and hard as ivory, the agility and grace of a gray squirrel, the playfulness of a kitten, the affection of a spaniel and the impertinence and persistence of a pet crow. I think she was the most companionable woman in the world, as variable as the needle of the compass in a tempest-tossed vessel, but still true to the pole; and her aged mistress lived a thousand lives in her ever-varying actions and antics. I was glad of this; for in kissing the maid it was killing two birds with one stone, kissing satisfactorily both the women whom I wanted to kiss and the woman whom I did not. She was far from being as wise as the attendant of the first of my gubernatorial hostesses; but wisdom is not the only desirable quality in a woman to a man.

The third was a counterfeit copy of the grandest of the governing women whom I had met yet, the ambitious Bara-toma—an imitation only, but none the less interesting as an illustration of mimicry in the human species to attain a preservative end in the easiest way imaginable—by weakness assuming the outward appearance of strength, poverty the apparel of riches and stupidity the gravity and reserve of wisdom. Whatever her magnificent prototype did she attempted to do or did, to the best of her imitative ability; and when she learned from Kala-pata how imperially Bara-toma had treated me and shared her governing power and her bed with me, she determined to do likewise, as the only proper thing to do. But early in life I had learned to recognize the difference between substance and shadow, cream and skimmed milk, and if in the morning the counterfeit Roba-lato could display the counterpart of the tooth mark on Bara-toma's neck, it was simply an illustration of the sailors saw of any port in a storm.

The fourth was inclined to adipose and avoirdupois, an amiable woman so easy in her adaptation to circumstances and so immobile as a grand and beautiful embodiment of comfort and serenity that she invariably turned her eyes rather than he rhead, her head rather than her body and her body rather than the world. When I was weary of doing nothing she provoked me to attack and stir her up, and in doing so I became aroused and excited, like a hunter beating about a bush that contained a beast of prey concealed in it, but whether tiger, lion, wild boar or elephant the event of a rout alone could tell. But in despite of my efforts to make the passive active, I left the governess as I found her—a beautiful baseball inviting me to bat her beyond the bounds of the field; a charming football coaxing me to kick and carry to my heart's content; or a calm and confident antagonist in the ring, provoking me to box and buffet and hug and tug in an incessant struggle to overcome to the end of the world. To a sluggard man she would have been an intolerable bore; but to an active and excitant to enthusiasm and exuberance.

While the fifth was a mental perplexity to comprehend: and this for the good and sufficient cause that she herself was perpetually in doubt—undecided whether she would or whether she would not. She was a very symmetric woman—the two sides of her face as nearly as possible identical—as well left-handed as right-handed—and balanced so evenly

in every way that I doubt not the halves of her brain were developed so equally that it was a physical impossibility for her to be of one mind or one mind subordinating the other. However, between two stools the breech comes to the ground, and while she stood in doubt whether she would welcome me or not, I took possession of her house; and while she sat in an emotional dilemma, declaring that really and truly she could not and would not say whether or not she was willing, I kissed her—till kissing ceased to be a drum to drowsiness and a slap in the lugs to sleep.

Betimes, too, I may say here that in the company of one or other of my obliging hostesses I visited a number of the large industrial establishments of the country, notably those which were devoted to weaving, dyeing, plaiting making cordage, netting and the like; but I found no notable variation in these industries from the various methods and processes which are employed in divers countries of the globe where that monster of all monsters, the Machine, has not destroyed the handicrafts of the people.

I visited also the great aerolite which had fallen in broad daylight, in the sight of a vast concourse of people, five hundred years (lacking one) before the birth of Christ, or 2379 years before my visit, if the records of the Revi-lonanians are to be believed; and presumably they are correct in this particular, for ever since the years have been reckoned from the falling of the mighty meteor.

I found it in the bottom of an artificial basin on the rocky divide between the oasis of Revi-lona proper and the great depression over the subterranean hot-water lake from which the blind fish were taken, of which I have given a brief account. The basin had been excavated in order that the aerolite might be seen in its entirety; for when it fell, it not only imbedded itself in the rocky ridge but also pushed a great mass of the surrounding stones and earth about it by reason of the great heat which was generated by the concussion. This slag also had been removed from the interstellar mass, and piled near the brim of the excavation; and to me it was scarcely less interesting than the aerolite—recalling at once the familiar dumps of vitrified cinders about the iron furnaces of my native state.

Howsoever, the aerolite was in size and shape so very like a whale of the largest proportions just in the act of diving head down and partly concealed and tail high in the air, and with a peculiar curve of the flukes, that I could not refrain from smiling at the resemblance when I beheld it first; and greatly to the surprise and horror of my guide; for, familiar as the people of Revi-lona were with the great metallic mass, they never forgot in its presence that they looked upon an incomprehensible waif from another world among the glowing stars of their infinite environment.

After a while, however, after I had walked around the mighty mass and viewed it from several points, and felt it and estimated its size and weight, somehow it began to assume the semblance of a colossal symbol of myself—hurled headlong into the isolated oasis—burning my way into the very foundations of the government—and doubtless to the same end as that in view, an inanimate marvel—perhaps tomorrow; and I left it with a heavy heart and a fearful foreboding.

CHAPTER XLV.

The twenty-fourth of my hostesses—the last on the list, Nada-nana being one, or the twenty-fifth—was suspiciously effusive in welcoming me on my arrival and in conducting me to my apartment, which I found to be luminous—another suspicious circumstance, from the particular exception which it formed to the general rule of darkness for a month or so back.

However, I paid little attention to these suspicions, for I soon became intensely interested in the discourse of my hostess, which, abounding in inuendo and insinuation, seemed ever on the point of revealing to me the real motive of Kala-pata in leading me about the country from one district to another; and I thought that if I continued to listen without interrupting her she would pass from hint to revelation, possibly before she intended to do so.

Sure enough, after stating that she had no reflections to make on the honored guest of the commonwealth, for he was in the hands of others; "but," she added, "I told Kala-pata to her face, and I am not afraid to tell it to the world, that she could not make a passive puppet of me to save her from disgrace and death, by becoming equally guilty with her, and then by joining with her and her conspirators in repealing unanimously one of the most salutory of the laws of the commonwealth. The saucy libertine! The impudent hussy; To dare to hint to me the perpetration of a crime so odious and an act so reprehensible! No! I said to the brazen woman, I will do my duty in entertaining the honored guest of the commonwealth, but no more; and for the offence which you have given me intentionally by holding me back to the last when I should have been the first or among the first, to receive a visit from the honored guest of the commonwealth, and for the insult which you have offered my sacred honor as a woman and a governess, I will avenge myself sometime, somewhere and somehow, you little suspect, you monster of immorality! Now, begone out of my district as fast as you can, and take your black and blue neck of unutterable shame along with you! Oh, it was enough to put a woman of purity and a governess of probity into a furious rage! But the storm is over now, and if the honored guest of the commonwealth will be good enough to pardon this exhibition of righteous indignation at slights and insults which I felt all the more keenly in my desire to see and in my zeal to serve you, in a manner becoming an honorable guest and an honorable hostess, please come with me to supper."

On entering the eating-room I detected a peculiar odor which I had never noticed before, and remarked it by sniffing a little more significantly than I intended.

"Ah, that is the flavor of one of my favorite dishes—a delicious viand which I trust you will relish equally with myself."

I did not like the peculiar odor, but I took some of the food on my plate to gratify my hostess, and after a while on observing that she ate freely of her favorite dish in confirmation of her word and in attestation of the innocuousness of the viand, I ventured on a bite; and,

contrary to my expectation, I found it not only palatable but also delicious, as my hostess had characterized it—so delicious in fact, that I was about to clean my platter, when a female moga in the wildest excitement and uproar rushed into the room, and having swept all the dishes from the table and trampled them under foot, attacked the governess most viciously with her beak and wings and feet.

I threw my arms around the neck of the furious bird of burden and endeavored to hold her in check with the millstone of my great weight; and I undoubtedly prevented the furious fowl from killing the governess outright by striking her to the floor with her powerful legs; but I could not prevent her from getting the helpless woman into a corner and pecking her about the face and neck till she fell insensible to the floor.

At thus juncture Kala-pata came into the room in the wildest alarm and amazement; and having subdued the moga by her presence and command—for the bird proved to be her own—she led her out of the room and put her in charge of the wondering throng that had gathered about the house.

And scarcely was this done when a strange woman, clad in blue, came into the room, staggering and out of breath, saying feebly with the motion of her hands: "I smell it! Oh, save the honored guest of the commonwealth from eating of it! There is no antidote to its effect that is known to me but time—a week, a month, a year, a lifetime perhaps, in accordance with the quantity which is taken into the system. Even the odor of the powerful poison is effective!"

Neither Kala-pata nor I knew exactly what this declaration meant; but I understood from it that I had taken a peculiar poison by eating of it and by inhaling its odor and that the sooner I got rid of it from my stomach and lungs the better.

Forthwith, accordingly, I ran out of the house and beyond the reach of the flavor of the delicious viand, and having tickled my throat till a copious emesis followed, I took to my heels again lest I might be poisoned a second time by the odor of the ejection.

I then went to the government house, where I found Kala-pata and the strange woman awaiting me and both in tears; and not feeling injured in the least, I assured them that I was unhurt and bade them wipe their eyes and return with me to the eating-house and minister to the relief of the wounded governess.

"She was more scared than hurt," Kala-pata replied; adding savagely, "and it is to be regretted by all the people of Revi-lona that she was not killed. But she will get her just deserts in due time."

She then made me acquainted with the strange woman as the General Superintendent of the Mogas, and the successor in office of the treacherous governess.

I, of course, was anxious to know the nature of the poison which had been administered to me with such dreadful effect, but which the treacherous woman at herself with a seeming impunity.

The superintendent replied that she had committed a crime already in revealing the fact that there was such a poison in existence; but she had felt it to be her duty, even at the risk of her life, to save the honored guest of the commonwealth from a possible impairment of the gravest character for a shorter or longer period, even to a term of his natural life.

"The secret of this powerful poison," she said, "has been kept for

centuries by the general superintendents of the mogas in succession; and its general use has been——"

The superintendent stopped abruptly, as if conscience-stricken that she was violating her oath of office

"Go on, my dear superintendent," I said. "In my behalf you already most generously have waded into the waters of crime up to your shoulders, and it will make little or no difference now if you go in deeper to your chin or over head.'

"It is true, honored guest of the commonwealth. But I shall do so on the condition only that you and the honorable governess here pledge me your honor to eternal secresy."

We did so, and the superintendent continued:

"The general use of the poison has been in allaying the sexual passion of the mogas, in order that they may be utilized as birds of burden—the males being made tractable and the females deprived of the power of laying eggs. Hence you will understand the rage of the sagacious female bird of the honorable governess here when she sniffed the peculiar odor of the poison in the street in front of the eating house; for, instinctively or from experience, she recognized in it the presence of an enemy which must be destroyed at all hazards, because it is an enemy not only to herself but also to her species. However, a special use of the poison has been made betimes in allying the passions of the men and women, making them as impotent as babes —this at the instance and by the authority of the Controller of the Population, who has an official knowledge of the existence of the poison, but is ignorant of its composition and preparation—that being a secret of the commonwealth which is imparted to none, but recorded in the archives for reference in the event of the supply becoming exhausted in the course of time. This supply was kept in my office in a certain bottle which was known only to myself and my predecessors; and the governess of the district, having been my immediate predecessor and having access to my office at all times without exciting suspicion, has taken the bottle and made use of the contents as you know, to the great grief of the honorable governess here and myself, and all the people of Revi-lona, I dare say, when they shall have knowledge of the outrage which has been committed on the honored guest of the commonwealth.

I thanked the woman for the information which she had given me (and which made me shudder to my marrow), and begged her in addition to tell me why the treacherous governess had eaten of the poisoned food herself and freely and with an apparent relish, when she knew its effect."

"From her use of the drug officially in the course of years she has inhaled so much of its odor that she is as passionless as a woman of wood."

"And hence so insanely envious of women of flesh and blood," added Kala-pata

"And such a paragon of purity as she professed herself to be to me," I concluded.

The superintendent then left us; and Kala-pata and I occupied the house of the absent governess, during the remainder of the night—she in a torment of tears and I possessed with an indescribable terror and horror; she having inhaled a whiff or two of the potent poison and I having taken it into both my stomach and lungs.

CHAPTER XLVI

Betimes during the course of my tour of the country I had observed that the top of the great tower-tomb was visible from every district; and accordingly it became the only landmark which I regarded in determining the direction of my wandering and approximating the relative situation of the several districts and their distances apart. Recently I had been approaching the stupendous pile; and I was of the opinion that I would find its base in the twenty-fourth district, and in all probability on the way to Maro, the capital of the country.

It was as I supposed; and soon after Kala-pata and I had set out for the city we entered the great highway of the country, and at length came to the tower. We were both in a pitiful state of dejection, and as uncommunicative in our misery as two drifting logs side by side in a sluggish stream. The size of the enormous structure, however, aroused me as we approached its base; and I requested my companion to stop and examine it with me, hoping that, haply, the marvel might divert her mind from the distressing subject of our temporary impotence.

I found the structure to be composed wholly of the dead bodies of the people of Revi-lona for many centuries, each imbedded in a mass of sinter of a particular size and shape to fit a particular part of the pile, and the whole solidified with the adamantine cement. At first I conjectured a single course of the coffins had been laid in a circle and unified. Then other courses were laid on this and cemented together till a height was attained which prevented the raising of the heavy blocks above the heads of the workmen. Then a second base course was started on the ground and the central column raised a man's height higher. Then a third base course, and so on, till it was found a great convenience to slope the outer course into an inclined way and carry it spirally around the structure; and this simple course of construction being of infinite sufficiency, it had been followed for ages.

While we stood at the base, a number of dead bodies were brought from different parts of the country for entombment; and I became interested in the operation to such an extent that I forgot about my physical impairment. They came swathed in shrouds of silk covered with a thin coating of sinter, which made them look like great cocoons and permitted their transportation readily and with as little suggestion of death and decays as if they had been sealed hermetically in silver-mounted caskets. They were laid then in molds of different sizes and shapes and the prepared sinter poured around them till the moulds were filled. The moulds then after the sinter had become hard, were removed and the artificial stones were carried up the spiral incline and adjusted in the places for which they had been shaped especially.

My companion and I followed one of these vertible tomb-stones to the top of the tower, a two hours' walk around and around till we

reached the summit, 1174 feet from the level of the ground; and I was in a rapture of delight at the extent, variety and ineffable beauty of the panorama which embraced, first, the irregular area of the oasis of Revi-lona, about as large as the largest of the counties of Pennsylvania; then an irregular but continuous belt of volcanic wilderness, with clouds of steam rising here and there, indicating the presence of geysers, and gleaming masses of sinter-like mountains covered with lustrous ice; and then a still more irregular but continuous belt of snow and ice, interblending with the sky and here and there a glimmer of the ocean current which had borne me hither, a ribbon of the most exquisite blue lying in graceful undulations on a crinkled gown of lustrous satin. And looking down upon the stupendous artificial rainbow that spanned the mountain chasm, opening a way from the harbor at the side of the ocean current into the oasis of the country proper, it seemed to be so small in comparison with itself when seen from below, that I laughed outright! I suddenly grew serious again, when my eye caught a certain funnel-shaped opening in the middle of the bridge; which I recognized as the initial point of execution for the very crime which I had committed in every district of the commonwealth, excepting the city of Maro, by virtue so far of the exempting clause in the treaty and the district I was in at the time, by reason of the suppression of my natural instincts which I found there to my inexpressible grief and horror and, perhaps one or two others—my memory being very lax and uncertain in such matters.

Howsoever, on seeing the funnel-shaped opening in the awful Arch of Justice, the marvelous attractiveness of the panorama vanished at once. I wished to descend, and my companion was more impatient than I, walking about restlessly and in a strange abstraction, out of which she looked alternately with the fire of vengeance flashing in her eyes and the ice of despair in a deadening glaze.

When about two-thirds of the way down, when the distance between the lines of the spiral walk above one another were as much as fifty feet perhaps, I stopped to observe a mounted governess who was approaching the tower from the direction of the interior and who appeared to have the peculiar bearing of Nada-nana.

Kala-pata walked on, and when she came to a point where the convexity of the stupendous structure was about to put her out of my sight, she attracted my attention by clapping her hands. I turned to look at her—and saw the living Kala-pata for the last time, the most rapturously beautiful and fascinating woman whom I had met in Revi-lona. For, saying to me with her hands as she raised them from clapping: "Better death than life without love," she leaped over the precipice. I did not see her in her descent, but I learned afterward that she struck on the outer edge of the walk immediately beneath her and fell to the next, a distance of over a hundred feet.

I rushed around and around the great tower like a mad man; and when I came to her dead body I fell insensible upon it; and happily I did for otherwise, in the extremity of my grief I would have hurled myself over one or more of the precipices still beneath me to rejoin her in death.

CHAPTER XLVII

On recovering from my swoon I found the corpse of Kala-pata gone and the adamantine Nada-nana at my side chafing my hands and looking pale and distressingly careworn. I was pitifully weak; but under her influence I walked to the foot of the incline without a thought of committing suicide.

Here I expected to find the body of Kala-pata, whom I had loved so passionately; but Nada-nana shrewdly had directed the men who took up the corpse to carry it upward around the curve of the tower out of my sight, and kept it there until after my departure. I found her bird, however; and having thrown my arms about her neck, I wept like a child.

This affected Nada-nana greatly, and when I released my hold on the bird, who seemed to know that a misfortune had happened to her mistress and submitted to my hugging in a sympathy of misery, I found my official guide in tears.

We then mounted our birds and proceeded to the city, Kala-pata's groom leading her bird by the side of mine in order to induce him to travel, and giving Nada-nana the first inkling of the means which Kala-pata had employed in leading me whithersoever she would, the moment I was on the back of the powerful male.

For a week or more after my return to my palatial residence in the city I was in a stupor of grief; seldom going out of my private apartment and regarded life and the world and all they contain with absolute indifference.

At length I was summoned officially to bear witness in a court of justice in the trial of the treacherous governess who directly was the cause of my personal injury and the anguish arising from it, and indirectly that of Kala-pata's death.

I found the court to consist of twenty men wearing monstrous masks, fantastic hats and grotesque gowns—the most extraordinary personifications of old Father Antic, the Law (as Shakespeare has it) the world has seen until this hour. I not only was amazed but also shocked at the sight of the buffoons; but on learning from Nada-nana that the disguise was assumed to conceal the personal identity of the officials in order that their familiar peculiarities or idiosyncrasies might not detract from them as the oracles of justice, infallible, unquestionable and final, for the welfare of the commonwealth, and when I reflected that the judges of the highest courts of my native country conceal their humanity with all its weaknesses and follies and foibles in an all-enveloping robe of darkness and that the judges of England conceal the littleness of their learning in the bigness of their bushy wigs, I concluded that the Revi-lonians were not alone in their contempt and fear of a naked man when seated on the throne of Jove. The human hide must be hid before it will invest any other idea than that of our common humanity.

But, howsoever, the monstrous masks were artificial heads, about

eighteen inches in diameter, and with a nose of prodigious size in an otherwise fairly well-shaped face, and adorned like the heads and faces of the members of the College of the Wise Men or the Academy of Science, whom I have described—powdered, painted, patched and wearing pendants of pearls in the ears, while the hair and beard were curled and dyed in the five class colors of the country equally. The fantastic hats wer conic in shap and fully as tall as the wearer with his artificial head, or five and a half feet, and colored in bands of equal width, beginning with red at the top, then orange, yellow and purple, with blue at the bottom or about the head. While the gowns came to the ground in length and consisted of five equal bands of color, beginning with red at the bottom and ending with blue at the top, or about the shoulders—reversing the order in the hats. Several of the judicial disguises also wore the ancient badge of honor, the Fish—one of them, indeed, three and another two, suspended by silken cords in loops around the neck; and nine of them had the nostril-compressor, like a clothes-pin, on the prodigious nose of the artificial face. And all had at hand the compound syringe for conveying ideas with odors and the big fan which I have described ahead and other appliances which I shall mention in due time.

These officials were divided into four groups of five. One of these comprised the judges proper, sitting on a single bench on an elevated dais, which, on close inspection I found to be an artistic counterfeit of the gigantic tortoise of the country, which, as I have said, was regarded generally as the symbol of the commonwealth. The second and third of the groups constituted committees or special juries or advocates and attorneys in a measure, to pass upon the questions of fact of the plaintiff or prosecutor and the defendant respectively; while one of the fourth group acted as master of ceremonies, instructing and directing the litigants and witnesses, and the four others served as tipstaffs while they kept themselves in readiness as relays or substitutes for any of their fellows who might be obliged from sickness or other cause to be absent during the course of a trial. I learned, moreover, that these officials took turns in the several functions of the court so that all in the course of twenty trials when all were present, served in the several capacities of judge, juryman master of ceremonies and tipstaff—an arrangement which might be adopted elsewhere and as beneficial perhaps as in Revi-lona. And besides these officials there were a number of attendants who acted as recorders, messengers and sheriffs or executioners and the like.

I found also that the several silent modes of speech in vogue among the Revi-lonians were a great convenience in the proceedings in this court; for at the same time without any confusion the judges were consulting with one another, the two committees were examining witnesses, the attendants were cracking jokes with one another in the little gaps between their duties and the censor and the witnesses awaiting their turn were commenting on a variety of subjects which were foreign to the matter before the court.

The charges against the governess on trial were two: First, the taking and carrying away of a certain bottle of a peculiar poison belonging to the office of the General Superintendent of Mogas, with a criminal intent; second, an assault upon the person of Anson Oliver, the honored guest of the commonwealth with the criminal intent of in-

juring or destroying him, by administering to him the peculiar poison taken, as aforesaid, in the first count.

The defendant governess admitted the taking away of the bottle and the administration of the poison, but denied the criminal intent in a general plea of justification in which the intent was transmuted into a patriotic motive.

The foreman of the committee of the defendant, who reported this plea, then began to read a statement of the defendant which purported to be the confessions of Kala-pata, late governess of the district of Rami-kolo, in which she implicated the honored guest of the commonwealth in divers crimes of a heinous character.

The judges, however, unanimously ruled that the statement was inadmissible, "for the several reasons," as the middle one of the five judges stated, "first, that Kala-pata was dead and could not be called to affirm or deny; and, second, that if proven true by the affirmation of the living Kala-pata, the plea would not avail in justification, and especially with a patriotic motive given as the intent. For if the defendant in any way had discovered the commission of a crime, a patriotic motive would have induced her to reveal the crime to the proper authorities, and prevented her from assuming criminally the functions of a court of justice, becoming in her own person the judges as to the law, the jurors as to the facts, the master of ceremonies in delivering the sentence and the sheriff in executing the same. Accordingly the plea of justification being refused, the confession of guilty, as charged in the two courts of the indictment, stands—"

Then, after a consultation between the judges and the master of ceremonies, the latter pronounced the sentence of the Court in a singularly impressive manner by tapping it on a kind of drum which emitted a sound that was absolutely blood-curdling in its tone and intensity: "Prisoner, arise an dhearken. It is the sentence of the Supreme Court of Revi-lona that you, Guli-mago as you have been tattooed and registered officially, having been adjudged guilty of the two several criminal charges which have been preferred against you by the censor o fthe district of Boto-foso, be taken hence by the High Sheriff of the said commonwealth to the top of the Arch of Justice and there cast into the Hopper of Helplessness that you may pass through the Hole of Horror and thence, in the sight of the people of Revi-lona, descend, a frightful flash of warning to Evil Doers, and disappear in the boiling water at the bottom of the Ever-open Well of Eternal Infamy. Prisoner, submit your hands to the Cuffs of Condemnation. Sheriff, do your duty, and the end of justice shall be attained, the Welfare of the Commonwealth."

The governess stood unmoved to the end of this awful sentence. Then, holding out her hands to the sheriff to receive the Cuffs of Condemnation, she said:

"I am proud to receive a doom of death for the welfare of the commonwealth, in the cause of which, in the opinion of this honorable court, I have erred criminally in assuming a function which did not belong to my high and honorable office. But before execution I beg the honorable court, through the censor of the district of the City of Moro, to receive and consider what I deem to be a true and just complaint against the honored guest of the commonwealth, or Anson Oliver, as he has been tattooed and registered officially in his native country, and which I have made under oath (literally, with my left hand poiting to the earth), in good faith and for the welfare of the commonwealth."

I shuddered at this; and I watched the proceedings with a greater interest than before—an interest as nearly breathless as it could be, and I survive suffocation.

The judges and the master of ceremonies again consulted with one another; and at length the latter, taking up two little flags of blue and white from a table, approached the sheriff, and having waved them before his eyes, said to him, in the series of movements made: "High Sheriff of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona, behold these flags of Judicial Injunction. In the matter of the high and honorable governess of the district of Boto-fogo, Guti-mago, as she has been tattooed and registered officially, and now in your hands wearing the Cuffs of Condemnation, suspend execution of sentence until ordered again to proceed by the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth. Prisoner, under sentence of death, extend your hands. Sheriff, remove the Cuffs of Condemnation. Recorder, make a minute of the facts."

"I have done so," replied the recorder, striking a kind of [illegible]phone or combination of resounding stones.

"It is well," rejoined the master of ceremonits.

Then, after another consultation between the judges and the master of ceremonies the latter took up from a table two gaudily painted balls of silk, about the bigness of his monstrous artificial head, and as tightly filled with air as a blown-up bladder, and began to juggle with them very dexteriously, saying by means of their motions as they passed over and under and around each other in a most extraordinary series of circles, ellipses and parabolas: "The sitting of the Supreme Court of Revi-lona is suspended until the overturning of the seventh measure in the morning of tomorrow. May the commonwealth endure forever; and the great balls of Health and Happiness continue to roll in the future as they have in the past."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Nada-nana was interested intensely in these court proceedings; and on our way home she remarked to me severely and yet with a sign of the deepest sympathy: "It would have been infinitely better for all concerned had you encountered this treacherous governess first."

"She then would not have admin s.ered to me the po son; for she would have been the first to receive a visit from me and not the last, and her envy of her unimpaired associates would not have been excited."

"But I mean it would have been infinitely better for all concerned had you taken the poison in any way before you set out on your most shameful, scandalous and flagitious tour of the country."

"Yes, I understand—it would have been infinitely better for all concerned had I never been born—a boy baby, but a girl instead."

And further conversation between us was interrupted for a time during which the awful Arch of Justice was in my vision, with its hopper of helplessness and its hole of horrors above, and the boiling water at the bottom of the ever-open well of eternal infamy below, and the honored guest of the commonwealth descending between, in the sight of the people of Revi-lona, a frightful flash of warning to evil-doers to the end of time! Betimes, the perspiration burst from every pore of my body; and in the dread of impending destruction in the inexsuperably horrible manner of the country, I became an object of such commiseration to all my attendants—Nada-nana excepted—that they clung around me in a tearful sympathy, those closest to me kissing my forehead, cheeks and neck and those farthest away my arms and hands and literally the hem of my garments.

And this burst of feeling over, the fifteen beautiful women endeavored to divert my mind from the catastrophe which was ever in my contemplation, by attracting my attention here and there in one way or another by smiling and laughing, by scampering off in squads in frolicsome sports and finally by casting their garments aside and plunging into the marvelously beautiful tank in the middle of the patio of my palatial residence.

But I turned from them in ineffable disgust, absolutely loathing what heretofore had thrilled me with delight.

I retired to my private apartment, and on the entering of Nada-nana, I ventured to ask her what would be the charge or charges against me.

"Presumably you know better than I the crimes which you have committed; and presumably, accordingly, you can answer your question better than I."

"Then the charges may be assumed to be in the aggregate treason at least, and punishable with death, and I am a doomed man without the faintest perceptible ray of hope."

"Unless a woman comes to your rescue."

"Yes, Nada-nana, if she will; and if she will not—another."

"Another! Who in the wide, wide world besides Nada-nana would or could assist you in your extremity?"

"I will tell you only after you have declined to assist me."

"I will do everything in my power to save you, and I will take to my heart the vilest woman in the commonwealth as an associate in rendering you assistance."

"I will relieve your mind if the vileness of your associate, then, by naming Nona-nano, a noble attendant of Rama-rima, the governess of the first district which I visited, a woman whom I regard as witty, wise and resourceful in the extreme."

"I know her well and esteem her highly. She is virtually the governess of the district in which you found her—her amiable but feeble-minded and fussy mistress being under her judicious charge. I will invite the governess to visit us here. Her monitor will attend her. And we shall be able to confer together here and act jointly as it seems best, without exciting suspicion. Happily, there are several vacant rooms in the big house."

"And happily also the apartment of the amiable governess will be safe from invasion," I added with a feeble effort to smile in assurance of a turning of the tide within me from the ebb of despair to the flow of hope.

Two days afterward the governess and her monitor arrived; and about the same time I received an official summons to attend the session of the Supreme Court to hear the charges which had been preferred against me and learn the action of the court thereon, whether dismissed or set down for trial after a reasonable time shall have elapsed to enable the defendant to prepare his defence.

At the first opportunity, accordingly, the amiable governess was put to bed under the strictest of injunctions to remain there till morning, for the sake of her health after her long ride. and Nada-nana and Nona-nano held a confidential conference in my apartment in my behalf—the witty, wise and resourceful woman, however, being converted into a senseless statue of stone when she learned that my physical impairment was not feigned.

CHAPTER XLIX

After a sleepless night the day dawned at length, and after leaving the amiable governess in the charge of my attendants, Nada-nana, Nona-nano and I set out for the courthouse, going in the direction of the awful Arch of Justice and have the stupendous structural horror full in our eyes. I ventured to look at it once, and fancying that I saw a frightful flash descend from the Hole of Horror, I started at the apparition, became as cold as ice and so weak-kneed that I staggered and possibly might have fallen to the ground had I not been supported by my sympathetic companions.

I was ashamed of my weakness, however, and after this shock to my nerves I was able to assume a bold and defiant exterior, let my interior be what it might—it was a chaos of consciousness of guilt, a dread of merited punishment, a horror of the mode of execution, a hope in the sympathy of the good women whom I had corrupted and a fire-like fear of the envy of my judges who were stunted so miserably in stature that I seemed to be in bulk the equal of all, minus their monstrous disguises, while in fact I was of any three of them

Howsoever, in due time I stood face to face with my accuser in the court of justice, awaiting the formal announcement of the information which had been made against me, charging me, I doubted not, with the highest crimes which were known to the law of the land: and in due form. By means of the two flags, the master of ceremony at great length and minute particularity, made clear to my understanding that I was charged—not with being a conspirator against the peace and permanence of the commonwealth—not with being an insatiate monster of libertinism among the governesses of the country—not with being of all-involving consequence, as I expected—but with being substantially and in language not to be misunderstood, a tramp!

Figuratively speaking, when I comprehended the charge which had been made against me, in its length and breadth and thickness, I fell from the top to the base of the towering tomb of the country, and went crawling and groveling around and about it, the most contemptible, the most despicable, the most insignificant animalculum of criminality, a hoboo, a Weary Willie! a Dusty Rhoads! and nothing more!

I was inclined to laugh, but suppressed my visibility to a smile in deference to the dignity of the court, but when I found that everybody considered the charge of the gravest character and learned that the punishment of a tramp in the commonwealth of Revi-lona was the same as a traitor, the awful Arch of Justice appeared again in my visions with undiminished vividness.

I then held a consultation with the committee of five who officiated as the counsel of the defendant, and suggested to them a motion to quash the information on the ground that under the treaty I was exempt from the operation of all laws except those which involved the morals and duties of the people and the authority and integrity of the commonwealth.

The committee considered the suggestion favorably; and after discussing it, the foreman made the motion to quash, and in support of it made an admirable speech—the most effective part of which, in my opinion, being that in which he argued that the vagabondage alleged in the information was unaccompanied by any proof or offer of proof that it affected either the morals or the duties of any of the citizens of the commonwealth or impaired the authority or integrity of the state.

The committee for the censor of the district or the nominal prosecutor or plaintiff, in the stead of the informing governess, then held a consultation; an dat its conclusion the foreman replied very briefly, stating in substance that the crime of vagabondage was a crime **per se**, and required no proof or offer of proof that it affected anybody or the commonwealth; and a crime **per se**, of a nature so heinous as to be deemed capital, in as much as it was a diffusive, wide-spreading and infectious immorality, the antithesis of duty, and an **imperium in imperio**, howsoever contemptible—the vagabond absolving himself from the authority of the commonwealth and impairing its integrity after the manner of a tapeworm in the human body. It was necessary for the prosecutor to prove only that separated and apart from his official guide, the honored guest of the commonwealth wandered from place to place, not as such honored guest of the commonwealth, but virtually, essentially and practically as a vagabond, eating of the stores and enjoying all the comforts of the commonwealth without doing a compensatory work or discharging a remunerative duty.

This was an exceedingly apt and pointed reply, turning all my weapons against me, and I was not surprised when the court overruled my motion to quash the information and ordered me to prepare for trial ten days hence.

By this decision I considered my case prejudged, for I could not refute the fact that for forty-four days I was wandering about the country, separated and apart from my official guide; and if that constituted the crime of vagabondage, as held by the court, there was an end of the matter. I was satisfied, too, that there was a deep undercurrent of prejudice against me in the country, for the passions of warfare are not allayed in the time they are aroused; and I regarded the whole affair a pretext to effect my extinction as a disturbing element in the country of direful portent.

My sympathizing comforters, however, thought differently; maintaining that the people of Revi-lona were so much the creature of habit that when the treaty was made with me they accepted the situation as if another aerolite of immovable magnitude had fallen in their midst—a something marvelous from another world incorporated with the commonwealth forever—but nothing to prevent them from going on in their several vocations as they and their ancestors had gone for centuries; and they challenged me to cite a single instance of ill-will or opposition which I had encountered in my tour of the country.

I was dogged in my despair, however, and would do nothing in my defence; and Nada-nana and Nona-nano could not agree, and each acted independently of the other and without consulting me.

And at length the day of trial came and I took my place in the dock with a stoic indifference to my fate—the mirror of my mind no longer reflecting only the awful Arch of Justice but as well the farewell signaling of Kala-pata on the brink of the precipice. "Better death than life without love!" for I had not recovered from the effect of the powerful poison which I had taken into my stomach and lungs.

Nada-nana took precedence in presenting her defence by reason of her exalted office as one of the Twenty-five Governing Women of the Commonwealth; and it consisted substantially of an account of my travels in a manner becoming the honored guest of the commonwealth, going from district to district on the bird of burden which had been provided for me by the government, stopping only at the official residence of the several governesses and never visiting any establishment without being under the guidance of a governess or her deputy; and that until the contrary was proven the presumption of law as to my innocence must prevail.

The committee of five who had charge of my defence held a long conference after Nada-nana had submitted her statement and proofs to them, and were unanimous in their opinion that their submission to the court would be a virtual admission of the crime charged, as already ruled by the court; for in the eyes of the law it made no difference whether a vagabond traveled on a bird or afoot, wore a blue or red gown, or lodged at the houses of governesses or fishermen, so be it, he was going about in a manner unauthorized by the law.

Nada-nana seemed to be transmuted into ice on learning their decision, and stood for a moment or two in a suspense that was agonizing; for when the color returned to her face it came as the flame of a fire that was consuming her very being. Going then to Nona-nano she said: "I have done and failed; do you save him and the proudest woman in Revi-lona shall be your slave!"

Nona-nano, in her marvelously gracious and winsome manner, then preferred her line of defence to the committee of counselors

"Was it not lawful for the honored guest of the commonwealth to mount the bird of burden which had been given him for his use as such?" she asked.

"Certainly," replied the foreman.

"And dismount?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then lawfully having mounted the bird, if the bird run away with him and carry him here, there or anywhere; is it not the fault of the government in giving him an unmanageable moga, rather than a crime in the honored guest of the commonwealth in being carried thus about the country?"

"Unquestionably, if the wilfulness of the bird determined the course; for in that case the rider would be an involuntary vagabond and not amenable to the law."

"That can be proven by a thousand witnesses, but the several grooms of the bird, who are here in court I doubt not, will suffice. The honored guest of the commonwealth has never had the control and guidance of his bird; and if his mounting and dismounting were lawful, that must result in the acquittal of the accused."

The committee of five concluded that the defence proposed was good and sufficient, and complimented the charming woman on her tact; and in due time they submitted it to the judges. Then followed a learned argument, in which the fact of my being an involuntary vagabond kept rising till it stood alone the consideration of the case, towering above everything around and about it, like the stupendous tower-tomb of the country.

The judges finally admitted that the defence was conclusive and directed the master of ceremonies to announce my acquittal.

This he did by twanging the strings of a kind of harp which

emitted a most agreeable sound, saying: "Prisoner, arise and hearken. It is the sentence of the Supreme Court of Revi-lona that you Anson Oliver, as you have been tattooed and registered officially in your native country, and now the honored guest of the commonwealth, having been adjudged not guilty of the crime with which you have been accused, are discharged from the obligations of the summons of the court, with the congratulations of the court to you on the vindication of your good name and to the commonwealth on its continuance without harm by your acts. Go, as if you had never been subjected to the ordeal of a public trial. Recorder, make a minute of the facts."

"I have done so," rang out the musical lithophone of the recorder.

"It is well," concluded the twanging harp.

The master of ceremonies then juggled with the symbols of health and happiness as I have described him heretofore, and the court was adjourned.

Nada-nana maintained a dignified composure during the proceedings, after she had failed, while Nona-nano was a perfect personification of delight. On our return to my palatial residence, however, my noble guide took my Portia in her arms and kissed her a thousand times—more or less—and expressed her gratitude and joy in a myriad of ways besides.

While I, in attempting to kiss my preserver from becoming a warning to evil-doers, became the recipient of at least ten thousand kisses from she and her amiable mistress and my fifteen beautiful attendants—from all around me, save Nada-nana alone.

And the following day the thrilling chapter of my trial on the charge of being a tramp came to an end by the execution of my accuser, the treacherous governess, who had poisoned me—none of my household, however, going out to see the soul-appalling spectacle.

CHAPTER L

There were two vacancies in the board of the Governing Women, occasioned by the suicide of Kala-pata and the execution of Guli-mago, and it was the duty of Nada-nana, as the governess of the district which comprised the capital city of Moro, to call her surviving associates together and elect two new members from the nasal or noble class of the Revi-lonanians—or the Heavenly Blues, Celestials, and the like, as I sometimes facetiously termed them from her garments of blue—there was usually a great scramble among the eligible women for the highest office in the country; and as every governess generally had a particuair and confidential friend with whom she desired to associate on terms of equality, the number of ambitious applicants naturally dwindled down before the day of the election to the number of voting governesses. The first balloting, accordingly, would result in none getting more than one vote; and then would come the bargaining and bickering and back-biting, the gossiping and grumbling, the setting up and pulling down, the spite work and the patriotic, as is usual, I believe in similar bodies in every part of the world from a conclave of cardinals in Rome to a convention of Democratic Delegates in the backwoods of Pennsylvania. In the end, from the changes and combination which were made oftentimes fortuitously in the general shaking up of the electors, one or other of the candidates would receive sixteen votes—the perfect number of the Revi-lonanians—or more, and that would determine her election. So, I was informed betimes by Nada-nana.

The day after the summons had been sent by signaling from tower to tower throughout the country, with the certainty of telegraphy and a simplicity and inexpensiveness worthy of note, I proposed to my official guide to take an active but secret part in the coming election and elect two women to the high office who had been of inestimable service to me—the General Superintendent of the Mogas, who, at the risk of her life, had prevented me from taking enough of the poison to impair me for life, and Nona-nano, who had saved me from making an exhibition of myself as a warning to evil-doers.

To this Nada-nana assented; saying, "But only for what I owe those worthy women; and provided that you conduct yourself as a man who has escaped by a hair's breadth only the boiling water at the bottom of the ever-open well of eternal infamy."

"The last to fall into the well has provided for that," I replied; and my answer was satisfactory. I then requested Nada-nana to suggest to the several governesses as they came to the city, the propriety of returning my visit to them, to congratulate me on my double deliverance, or what not, so be it they came to see me singly that I might confer with each in confidence and influence her in favor of my candidates, as best I might, with my knowledge of her individual regard or affection for me, or other personal peculiarity.

This she promised to do; and in due time, I had the honor and pleasure of receiving a visit from each of the twenty-two governesses and made the same secret and confidential bargain with each, that if she would cast her first vote in favor of my two candidates, (whom I desired especially to compliment for the services which they had rendered me, but with little hope of seeing them elected,) I would cast all the votes which I could influence in favor of her candidates in all the subsequent balloting. This seemed to be exceedingly generous in me: and they all regarded it as an expression of the special esteem in which they were held individually by the honored guest of the commonwealth.

At length, the election took place, by secret balloting, (the names of the candidates being knotted on a thread of silk, and the thread then drawn through a little sinter tube like a pipe-stem, inscribed with the name of the voting governess—the knotting being concealed until the thread was withdrawn by the tally-clerk;) and my two candidates received twenty-three votes apiece on the first ballot—as I expected; for I had had a little experience in politics before I left the wilds of Western Pennsylvania.

When the result of the election was announced, according to Nadanana's report to me, the amazement of the electors was so extreme they could not credit it, and they would not accept it—there must be some mistake about it—or, there has been some fraud practiced—or, the box has been stuffed—or, a revolution had occurred and the commonwealth was a thing of the past; but when, after staring at one another, and consulting with one another, as to how they had voted without giving a reason for doing so, they came to the conclusion, one after another till they were unanimous, that the honored guest of the commonwealth was not only the most magnificent man the eyes of woman ever beheld, but also a perfect prodigy as a politician—an Emperor born in the purple, if ever there was one in the world!

And Zali-como and Nona-nano were declared the officially elected governesses; and as neither was aware of what I had been doing in her behalf, they were overwhelmed with surprise and delight at their undreamed of advancment.

CHAPTER LI.

The day following the election, the ambitious Bara-toma—the born empress—called to see me, to inform me in private, that the death of Kala-pata had thrown all her guilty associates into a confusion little short of consternation Several of them—whom she would not name for the world in a matter so shameful and shocking—were satisfied that in the course of time they would become mothers; and unless they were absolved from the crime which they had committed, they would be executed Now, Kala-pata had pledged her sacred honor to her associates, that, at the next session of the congress of the governing women for the purpose of making and amending laws, she would take upon herself the special shame of suggesting the passage of a new law which would exempt the governesses from the pains and penalties which otherwise would attach to their illicit intercourse with the honored guest of the commonwealth; and since her suicide, none of the erring governesses would take her place and incur the odium of bringing the matter before her associates for immediate action; for, unquestionably, the emotion would be regarded as a confession of that which in a governess would be scandalous in the extreme—she herself would suffer a thousand deaths rather than subject herself to the suspicion.

"It is a serious matter to have the awful Arch of Justice in one's visions by day and dreams by night—I have experienced it to satiety aleardy; and I assure you, my dear governess, since I am involved in the crime of your unfortunate but nameless associates, I do not want to go through the ordeal again, and will do all in my power to save them and myself."

"Then you will give us another proof of the incommensurable power that amazes us all."

"I think I can find a guiltless woman who will stand in the stead of Kala-pata and defy suspicion. I think also, I can find another guiltless woman who will second the motion, without fear of criticism —Also, two other guiltless women who will vote for the measure, if I beg them to do so in order to save mysef. And if I do so, will you secure, through your powerful influence, a sufficiant number of votes to insure the passage of the measure."

"Trust me for that—enough to make the vote unanimous."

After the departure of the grandest of the governesses, I sent for Nona-nano; and having informed her of the danger in which her former mistress, the amiable Rama-rima, and I were then, on account of an intimacy which was known only to her, I begged her to do a special favor to the governess and myself by suggesting to her associates in the government a new law, which,, without naming anybody or exposing anybody to suspicion would relieve the good woman from the death penalty, as well as myself.

She accepted the duty with delight; for, from certain signs and symptoms which she had observed, she was sure that the best of

women was in danger. She, also, had been casting about to find an escape from the executioner: but she had not been able to compass a practicable scheme.

I then sent for Zali-como to second the motion of Nona-nano, and obtained her promise to do so without the slightest hesitation—as I expected; for the good woman, having risked her life to save me from a physical impairment, I was convinced, would not hesitate to subject herself to a baseless suspicion to save my life.

I next called on the two old governesses who had taken me to their hearts figuratively if not in fact; and I got their promises readily to help me; for their age absolved them from any suspicion. Successful so far, I ventured to broach the matter to Nada-nana.

"These are good women whom you have corrupted and put in jeopardy; and you do well in striving to secure for them the immunity which I possess. But I will promise to vote for the new law only on condition that it exempts my associates from the penalties of the crimes which have been committed in the past—not the future; for there is a possibility that your impairment may not be permanent; and I will not be a party to an enlargement of the limits of your libertinism."

But, with this proviso in the law, who would vote for it? Only those who knew themselves to be in danger; and how few or how many there were, nobody could tell.

Better far the one negative vote of Nada-nana, than run a risk so dangerous.

And so, in due time, the bill was passed without the proviso, receiving in its favor twenty-four votes and one against it.

But this did not make it an effective law—for, curiously after a bill had been passed by the governing women, it was sent to the Supreme Court for approval or disapproval; and in the event of approval, it was re-enacted and made effective; while in the event of disapproval, it was set aside. But this, however, did not prevent the legislative body from framing and presenting another law which avoided the objections of its predecessor.

The new, or, rather the proposed law, accordingly, was sent to the court; and after the lapse of a day or so, it was returned with a veto, on the ground that a law must be general and not special in the Commonwealth of Revi-lona—that, an exemption which applied only to the governing women was contrary to the spirit of the constitution of the country for ages, and, necessarily, must be disapproved by the court.

This objection was met very easily, by extending the exemption to all the women of the commonwealth. The proposed law then received the approval of the court and was re-enacted by the legisaltive body, with one dissenting vote—that of Nada-nana—amid a tempest of poo-poohs from her associates to the effect that my official guide and companion wished to monopolize the honored guest of the commonwealth—of course—of course—the selfish woman!

But misery of misery! was ever mortal man in a more horrible predicament since the days of Tantalus! With all the women of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona, and, by all odds, the most beautiful women of the world, at my command, as my lawful wives, or mistresses, or concubines, or what you will, and I a man in semblance only! a g'

gantic infant! a shadow! a sham! an imperial personification of impotency!

The horrible thought was with me night and day, formulated generally in the dying words of the passionate Kala-pata, "Better death than life without love;" and I contemplated suicide a thousand times, but, perhaps, to seriously or too philosophically, like Hamlet: for I never came to a conclusion sufficiently conclusive to cause me to make an attempt to kill myself. An impulse and an opportunity might have been more effective.

Howsoever, Nada-nana suspected what I was thinking about, but was not alarmed, saying, at one time, "No, you will not commit suicide for there is less reason now for doing so than heretofore. When you had your intoxicating liquors, you were a beast—then you might and should have killed yourself with propriety. So, when you had your marvelous weapons, you were a coward—then, too, you might have slain yourself becomingly. So, before you were poisoned, you were a monster of libertinism—and then, likewise, your self destruction would have been advisable and admissible. But now—the only good which you have done to your fellow man or woman since you came to Revi-lona, you are doing in assisting to save your victims; and there is no reason for your committing suicide, and you will not—or, rather, you shall not attempt to do so!"

CHAPTER LII.

I must turn now from myself to the ship. Before I was permitted to leave my cabin blind folded, on the memorable day of quitting the vessel in the harbor, the deck contained a number of men who were experts in throwing not only the kind of bolas which I have referred to as the means employed to hobble the fighting mogas, but also as a veritable lasso which was used in capturing runaway birds and also in subduing the refractory males. In all probability, accordingly, if I had attempted to remove the bandage from my eyes, I would have been lassoed and hobbled at once and strangled perhaps in the unequal struggle. And the moment I stepped into the barge a throng of boatmen scrambled up the sides of the vessel and crowded the deck with their number.

Afterward, as the governing women, pending the treaty negotiations, had determined to do in the event of the vessel becoming the property of the commonwealth, the ship was put into the hands of the Chief of the Engineers for preservation while the contents were given to the Academy of Science for investigation and eventual exhibition in a public museum to be erected and fitted for the purpose, and about the time I had developed into a successful politician and lobbyist, the twenty-five governing women were invited by the Chief of Engineers to inspect the work which he had done in the way of protecting the ship against the ravages of water and wind for many years, and as well by the Academy of Science to visit the new museum and feast their eyes on the world of wonders with which it was filled. I was invited, also, to accompany the governing women, and, if convenient, to make a preliminary visit in advance to the ship and museum in order that I might explain the uses of a myriad of mysterious things, and give their names, that they might be labeled properly for the edification of all.

I accepted the several invitations, and in due time, accompanied by my official guide, I made the preliminary visits.

I found the ship high and dry on a series of supports in a special dock of sinter which has been made for it, and every part of the out-

side of the vessel coated with the adamantine cement, making it to the eye a stupendous freak of frostwork and as beautiful as fantastic!

A substantial gangway led from the dock to the deck of the ship and having passed over this, I found the anchors and chains in their porper places and the loaded brass cannon in the bow, the try-works in order, the sails furled and the rigging intact, and all covered with the industructible sinter to endure without disturbance for ages.

I then went below and found the interior encrusted similarly and luminous with an overlaying of the phosphoresent paint of the country, the effect being delightful in the extreme, the great complicated dungeon with its myriad of gloomy cuddy-holes and darksome recesses, a cavern of enchantment, cut out of an enormous gem self-luminous with a diffusive diamond-glow! Moreover, all the stenches of the old whaler were gone—of fish, old horse, and blubber—of tobacco, slush, and bilge, and in their stead, one of the many delicate perfumes of the country pervaded the atmosphere seemingly to me like a combination of carnation, cinnamon, and the rind of the frosted quince. To the official custodian of the metamorphoses ship, from a hideous and nauseous object to a corolla of the rarest beauty and fragrance, I gave the limited information of a landlubber who had been converted into a galley-slave, and proceeded to the museum.

I found here the thousand and one movable articles which the ship had contained, to my knowledge, and seemingly ten thousand and ten other objects of interest to the Revi-lonanian men of science which had escaped my observation. The first contained the ship's coppers, or cooking utensils, the medicine chest, a number of harpoons, lances, cutting-in spades, boat hatchets, knives, ladles, and other appliances belonging to the outfit of a whaling vessel, the coal from the bunkers, the furniture of the cabins and forcastle, the flags and bunting, the whaleline, tar, paint, and other supplies, the bedding, and the clothing of the captain, myself, the sailors, and the captain's daughter, the instruments, chronometer, books and papers of the captain, the molasses, pickles, biscuit, and other provisions, the chests of the sailors and their contents, pocket knives, pipes, tobacco, money, rings, string, thread, needles, pins, trinkets, scrimshaws of divers kinds, carved shark teeth, albatross wing-bones for pipe stems, shells, letters, photographs, pens, pencils, ink, snuff, mirrors, combs, and brushes, and such living things as rats, by the dozen, fleas, by the score, chinches by the hundred, and roaches by the thousand, while the second contained a marvelous miscellany of buttons, an extraordinary assortment of tacks, nails, scerws and spikes, an astonishing display of human hair of every conceivable color and texture, the perfect skeleton of a cat, a variety of feathers, a great collection of bones, bits of glass and crockery, scraps of leather, toothbrushes, toothpicks, keys of divers sizes and shapes, chips and splinters of several kinds of wood bits of egg-shell, pieces of several kinds of stone, a variety of beetle shards and butterfly wings, several kinds of minute eggs, presumably insect, innumerable rags and pieces of paper, and a great assortment of seeds among them notably two or three kinds of beans and grains of rice, coffee, wheat, and oats, and a single grain of Indian corn or American maise, and a number of living things, insects, worms, and the like, which I had never seen before.

I was amazed at the immense collection, and I marveled that so much had come in the ship of which I was ignorant, at which the wise men in turn were surprised, and when I declared that it would take

me all winter to go over the museum in detail and tell them what I knew about each particular object, they were disappointed and delighted at the same time.

I suppose the rats were responsible for secreting many of these articles in the cracks and crevices and holes of the whaler in the course of her many years of service, and the sediment of the bilge-water, doubtless was the amber which has preserved many more, but for the remainder, I have no conjecture to offer.

Howsoever, there was one part of the display which I could not set aside for future consideration. This was the department of apparel. Here I found a number of shapely and really artistically made dummies of men and women ready to receive the several articles of dress, and in view of the expected visit of all the governing women in a body, I was requested to adjust the garments properly for their special edification and general delectation. I did so, with the assistance of Nada-nana, and when I saw the simulacra of my countrymen and women, so strangely grotesque and blane in the compounding and yet so glaringly real and recognizable in every particular, I became possessed with a divided feeling of mortification as their unaccountable uncouthness and ridiculous impropriety, and homesickness—the first sensation ever I had felt of that strange disease that compels the organism that has wandered out of its natural environment—or the proverbial fish out of water—to return to it, or die.

Home! home! home! I could not dispossess myself of the thought, and I could not suppress the feeling that rose within me, till, in a paroxysm of nostalgia, I took up the grain of Indian corn and kissed it passionately in a flood of tears. Neither the wise men around me nor my official guide, Nada-nana could comprehend the cause of my overwhelming emotion, for none of the people of the isolated oasis had been beyond the confines of the country for untold ages, and the mysterious attachment between a man and the place of his birth had never been reavealed to them. They looked at one another for a solution of the puzzle, but in vain, and having observed the seed upon which I had concentrated my passion, they regrdaed it as the kohinoor of the collection.

CHAPTER LIII

A few days afterwards, in the morning of the day of the intended visit of the governing women in a body to the ship and the museum, I had another spasm of homesickness at the thought of seeing again so many reminders of my native country, so hopelessly far away as if it were on another planet, and I begged Nada-nana to permit me to remain in my private apartment, on the ground of sickness, until her return. This she refused to do, and having reproved me for yielding to a weakness which was absolutely unimaginable and indefensible to her, I accompanied her sullenly.

On our way, we found that the people in the neighborhood of the ship were in consternation. An unknown disease of a most horrible eruptive character had broken out among the people who had washed the clothing found in the ship, and already eight had died, and twenty-nine others, who had attended the first to get sick, were down with the mysterious disease and deserted by all their neighbors in a general and uncontrollable horror and dread.

I shuddered at this, for I surmised at once that the new disease was smallpox.

I communicated my belief and fears to Nada-nana, and bade her detain her associates from going either to the ship or the museum, and convene them in the antechamber of your residence that I might explain to them the nature of the scourge and acquaint them with the only means that had been discovered to combat and suppress it, vaccination; and while she was running from one to the other, I returned to our residence to find if possible one of the inestimably precious scabs which in frivolous sport I had produced on my beautiful attendants.

I called them together, and informed them what I wanted; and I shuddered again and again, when I found that they had been glad to get rid of the nasty things as quickly and as completely as possible, for I recollected that, in vaccinating them, I had made use unnecessarily of all the points in the medicine chest of the ship.

But Nada-nana had been vaccinated, too, and in her superior wisdom and care, she might have saved the potent scab of the mysterious sore? So I hoped, as I paced to and fro in my excitement and impatience until her return, when I learend that she too had cast away with pleasure the disagreeable reminder of my cruel sport at her expense.

Happily, however, in the excess of my depravity, I had vaccinated one of the beautiful women over the ischiatic process that she might be incommoded for my amusement when she attempted to sit, and the scab was found affixed to the seat of a cast-away gown, whereupon, a revulsion of my feelings of disappointment and distress occurred, and in my elation, I could not refrain from smiling and remarking in mock gravity,—"The fate of empire depends betimes on very curious and inconsiderable chances!"

At length, the twenty-five governing women having assembled in the grand antechamber of my palatial residence, I informed them of the nature of smallpox, which I believed to be the dreadful eruptive disease which had appeared in the city among the people who had washed not only the clothing found on the ship but also all the filthy rags which has accumulated in the course of many years in the cracks and crevices of the holes—carried there in all probability by the rats which had infested the ship—and which endoubtedly contained the almost indestructible germs of many diseases. Happily, however, the scourge of mankind for ages was found to be abortive under certain circumstances and was now perhaps the most controllable of all the epidemic diseases of a general and gravid character. In fine, the salvation of the people of Revi-lona was concentrated in the little scab which I held between the tips of my fingers.

I then explained to them, as well as I could, the theory and practice of vaccination, by which the dread disease was reduced artificially from an exterminator of nations to a harmless boil, and exhibited the scabs on the persons of several of my attendants in proof of the innocuousnes of the remedy, and, in the end, I vaccinated the three women whom I believed I could trust the most implicitly in the awful emergency which I believed to be impending, the wise and resourceful Nona-nano, the self-sacrificing Zala-coma and the influtential Bara-toma. Next, I laid before them a plan by which the disease might be confined to a certain area or areas, while the multiplication of the scab was going on by arithmetical progression over the country from the coast inward and the people rendered proof against the invasion of the scourage.

The plan consisted of isolating with a sinter wall the part of the city in which the disease has appeared, and confining there all the inhabitants, the sound as well as the sick, on account of the difficulty of determining who were carrying about them the potent germs. The prisoners could be supplied with food, by casting it over the wall from the portected part of the city; and I would go among the afflicted in the lazaretto and minister to them to the best of my ability, with such assistance as I could get from volunteers among my vaccinated attendants. In the meantime, or while I would be engaged with my assistants in the isolated area, a second wall should be constructed so as to include about half of the contiguous city, and a third across the mountain chasm, by which the city could be cut off completely from the interior. In the second of the isolated districts, I desired Nada-nana to remain; and in the third, Bara-toma; while Nona-nano and Zali-como should go into the interior and attend to the vaccination of the people and maintain the food supply of the isolated city, with the assistance of such of their associates as could leave their districts safely.

My plans were adopted unanimously by the panic-stricken women; and before the lapse of half a day, the chief of the engineers and a large body of workmen were engaged secretly in sealing up with sinter an area of the city which contained about a thousand inhabitants, and as well the encrusted ship in the dry-dock and the new museum. I then called for volunteers among my attendants to go with me into the hell of horrors and do what we could to stay the ravages of the scourge, relieve the suffering, and cast the dead into the sewers; and the fifteen beautiful women, clinging to me and one another, cried out in as many ways, that, where I would go, they would go; and that

if it were to face either the terrors of the unknown or death, they already had been doomed to that in his company.

And, in due time, on the completion of the sintar wall and the successful trapping of a thousand people in the jaws of death, my fifteen beautiful attendants and I were lowered from the top of the wall into the midst of a most bewildered throng, running hither and thither, expostulating threatening, weeping, tearing their garments, butting their heads against the wall, and bewailing their miserable fate in a thousand different ways.

I went at once among the dying and the dead, and found the disease to be, not smallpox, as I had surmised from the reports which I had received of the ravaging eruption, but measles.

I was mortified at the mistake which I had made, and was about to return to the wall and summon Nada-nana and inform her of my discovery. On a moment's reflection, however, I concluded to remain where I was and let the work of occlusion go on; for the aggravated form in which the usually harmless disease had appeared made it probably a more formidable malady with which to deal than smallpox, for I knew no way of either abating or suppressing it, except by keeping fuel from the fire and letting it burn out of itself.

Happily, I had had measles in my youth and my chances of taking the disease again were so few as to be disregarded; but unhappily, my fifteen beautiful attendants were no more immune against the terrible contagion than the people of the district in which it appeared.

I felt that I was honor-bound to inform them of this fact; for, relying on my unimpeachable wisdom and the incomprehensible virtue of vaccination, they had volunteered to face a deadly foe in smallpox, but not in measles. At the earliest opportunity, accordingly, I revealed the situation to them, and they responded nobly and unanimously that "they had come to assist me—no matter the disease or danger!"

And with such assistance, I exerted myself to the utmost, early and late, and unceasingly; but without avail. The epidemic continued to spread and increase in severity; and at length, one after another of my fifteen noble assistants succumbed to the uncontrollable contagion.

When the first fell sick, however, I thought of the dose of castor oil which I had given her in my contemptible sport; and at once I went to the museum to secure what if any remained in the medicine chest after the men of science had investigated to their satisfaction the contents of all the bottles and boxes in the mysterious collection. I found about a pint of the precious medicine; and with the happiest effect, I administered an ounce or so to each of the fifteen as she required it, and reserved an equal quantity for Nada-nana in the event of her becoming afflicted in the future; and in the end, I had the ineffable pleasure of congratulating them and myself on their recovery.

And here I must stop, in my history of this awful plague of measles, which, in the course of a month, broke over the first of the walls which had been built to confine it, and, in the course of two months, broke over the second, and for a further period of six weeks ravaged the whole of the city to the third and last of the walls across the mountain chasm beneath the awful Arch of Justice, till as many as seven thousand two hundred and eleven men and women died of the dreadful disease.

I have no heart for horrors; albeit, I became inured so thoroughly to the sight of suffering, without the slightest hope of relief, in

fact, that I sometimes thought I would find a gruesome satisfaction in reviewing the calamity in fancy. Suffice it, the city of the living became to an appalling extent the city of the dead; and when the great subterranean colosseum became a more convenient receptacle for the deposition of the dead bodies than the harbor, the sewer mouth at the bottom of the vast basin became clogged in some way, and as many as seventeen hundred and fifty-eight corpses floated about in the little lake of pent-up waters within it, until the obstruction was removed as mysteriously as it had been formed, and the indescribably revolting accumulation of decomposing humanity was sucked out into the sea.

Nada-nana was among the last to yield to the epidemic. I watched her and nursed her with the most anxious solicitude and the tenderest care. I compelled her, however, to take the last dose and the last drop of the nauseous but precious castor oil; and when she had passed the critical period of the disease, she put her arms around my neck and kissed me repeatedly, saying, between her kisses, "You have proven yourself a man, by the self-sacrifice which you have made during this awful plague; and I am as proud as happy to kiss you again."

CHAPTER LIV

The country beyond the mountain wall was appalled when it learned what had happened in the city; and the survivors of the city were appalled in turn when they learned what had happened in the country; for although communication was kept up over the wall by signaling, it was deemed advisable to keep the people on the opposite sides of the wall in absolute ignorance of each other's affliction, and suppress a general consternation which would defeat all the measures for the protection of the people.

There was also a strange epidemic in the interior of the country, at the time the plague of measles was ravaging the city, and while its primary effect was inappreciably disastrous by reason of its diffusion as a general influenza of a seemingly simple character, its secondary was a prolongation of suffering for many months and a mortality in the aggregate that exceeded that of the circumscribed and concentrated city, the peculiar epidemic I diagnosed to be la grippe; another way in which it caused the awful destruction of human life, was indirectly by attacking the mogas, and decimating the flocks in the course of a few weeks, and cutting off the supply of the infantile food of the commonwealth to an extent so great that the sucklings died by the hundreds—and in time, by the thousands—of starvation!

Other sequelea of the epidemic were equally curious and strangely disastrous in the end. The first person to sneeze was Mala-cata, the twelfth of the governesses in the order of my involuntary visiting, whom I have described as a malingerer, with a mentality a little below the normal line and somewhat perverted; and upon investigation, the censor of the district found in her possession several articles of sailor clothing which she had purloined from the museum, for no other reason than that she was naturally one of the rarest of the criminals known to the law of Revi-olna, a thief; for, as she afterward confessed, she had taken them simply to possess them in secret, without any purpose to use.

For this crime, she was tried; and I endeavored to save her on the ground that she was a kleptomaniac. But the judges held, and perhaps wisely, that a single act is not conclusive as to insanity; and, in the end, she was executed.

And the very day she was made a frightful flash of warning to evil-doers, an embroidered chemise and a ruffled skirt, which had been filched from the museum also, were found not only in the possession but also on the person of the proud and haughty Lulu-mama, the prodigiously vain and pretentious governess, who, arrayed in a counterfeit hat to that found among the apparel of the captain's daughter, and nothing more, imagined that she surpassed in sublimity the grandest of the geysers of Revi-lona, ejecting a column of boiling water higher than the top of the Washington monument!

This strange woman had many estimable qualities, and I respected her for them, in despite of her extravagant vanity. I tried to save her also but in vain; and she too was toppled into the Hopper of Helplessness, to pass into the Hole of Horror, and thence, to descend a frightful Flash of Warning to Evil-doers and disappear in the boiling water at the bottom of the Ever-open Well of Eternal Infamy.

This left two vacancies to be filled in the governing board; and the deaths about the same time—and, I think, from the same cause, the grip—of the two old governesses, left two more; and the scramble for the high office among the eligible women came within an ace of involving the country in a complicated internecine war. I refused to take part in the struggle, except as a peacemaker; and I believe that through my influence alone the form of government as it had been for ages was preserved. The animosities and enmities of the struggle, however, were never allayed; and the perfect vase of the commonwealth to the eye was in fact a patchwork of fragments fitted together but not joined with a cement.

Among the four elected, I was glad to find Lota-melo, the big and beautiful girl, who, after running and wrestling with me unsuccessfully, out-dared me to swim a race with her. I assisted her secretly, as well as I could and she was very grateful for my help—proving to be one of my staunchest friends through thick and thin.

I may here note, too, that a third theft from the new museum ended in a third execution, to my great regret and relief the grain of Indian corn which I had kissed in a paroxysm of homesickness, disappeared from its proper receptacle: and after an elaborate amount of detective work by the shrewd and tireless censor of the district which would have been creditable to one of the great agencies of America, the precious seed was found concealed in the silken fish which was worn as a badge of honor and merit by one of the most distinguished of the members of the Academy of Science. I pitied the poor man from the bottom of my heart, for purolining the object which my feelings alone had made irrestibly attractive to him, but pity was unknown in the impartial courts of Revi-lona. The little man, besides, was a very congenial friend, and a heroic assistant in alleviating the misery of the awful plague.

CHAPTER LV.

The last execution brought to my mind the propriety of planting the seeds of the several varieties of useful food plants which I had seen in the museum. I suggested the matter to Nada-nana; and she brought it before the board of governing women then in session.

I addressed the assembly of governesses in response to an invitation to inform them of the nature of the plants and their products; and after advising them to permit only the seeds which I designated to be planted, for fear of introducing noxious weeds, I volunteered to assist a committee of the wise men of the country in their cultivation.

At the instance of Bara-toma, this was about to be approved, when three of the new members objected, and insisted on having first a report of the wise men on the subject, (these three members being women who had never come under my influence, or that of Bara-toma) the leader of the congress was surprised and chagrined at this opposition; and, in the end, she was mortified and embittered against many of her associates who voted with the new members against her and carried the motion.

The wise men reported in favor of planting all the seeds, and eliminating the noxious from the useful after they were found to be such; arguing, and not without force and plausibility, that the bane of one country might be the bounty of another, and, conversely, the blessing of one might be the cause of another. And besides, I confessed to be ignorant of so many seeds; that only a small part of the whole collection would be planted, if my advice were taken, and the country deprived of the benefit of a comprehensive experiment, which, in view of the recent serious impairment of the food products of the country, was demanded imperatively.

Running through the whole argument, moreover, there was a side reflection ad hominem which the honored guest of the commonwealth accepted with such grace as he might under the circumstances; for under my ruling, I should have been debarred from the country, and I myself justified the measures which had been taken by the cautious and conservative people to destroy me.

I regretted also that my conservation had brought about the revolt against the natural head and from the governing body; and I advised Bara-toma to ignore it for the time being and abide her time to assert her domination, but she turned against me savagely, saying "you may be water, if you please, and seek to settle ever at the bottom; but I am a mountain, with my head above the clouds!" And before the session closed, she had the order set aside by an overwhelming majority, and another adopted which forbade the planting of any of the seeds!

In the meantime, however, by virtue of the authority of the first official act, all the seeds had been put into the ground with the greatest care, and it was impossible to restore them to their several places in the museum.

I, accordingly, begged Bara-toma to have the final order rescind-

ed—that she had convinced everybody that her will was the will of all the governing women; but she rebuked me again, saying, "I don my clothes in the morning and I doff them at night, but I keep my head on my shoulders all the time!"

And when the woman went away from me in the grandeur of her imperial power as a birthright, I marvelled that I ever had held her in my arms a spinning, reeling, sleeping top or passion—a perfect plaything to love!

Indeed, about the time the second order was adopted, several varieties of the seeds had begun to germinate; and a few days afterward, there was a surprising number of little pale green points coming out of the ground into the sunshine of the rapidly advancing summer. The wise men were in an ecstacy of delight at the sight, and studied the growth of the many varieties with an interest amounting to enthusiasm and the ceaseless solicitude of a smiling mother at the cot of a convalescent child. I caught the contagion of their concentration over the growing plants, and beheld a veritable spring time on a limited scale in their unfolding; and when they began to assume recognizable shapes—the peas, the beans, the lettuce, the oats, the wheat, the water-cress, and a single blade of maize—I had a second attack of homesickness, which was not so violent or paroxysmal as the first, but infinitely more pervading and persistent. And as Pennsylvania appeared in my visions, Revi-lona vanished, the subjective overcoming the objective; and I lived again a happy childhood, a bounding boyhood, and an excessively overflowing early manhood in the fields and forests and among the hills and valleys of my native state.

I was recalled, however, suddenly and as summarily as suddenly by an announcement by one of my fifteen beautiful attendants that Nada-nana was in convulsions.

I ran to her bedside to find her in the throes of a natural labor; and in a short time, I had the ineffable pleasure of hearing the cry of a new born babe—the first vocal utterance of a Revilonian for ages!—and on congratulating my official guide and companion on being the mother of a perfectly formed and fully developed baby daughter; while I strutted about the apartment with the prodigy in my hands, not only the proudest father in the world, but also the happiest man imaginable on hearing the human voice again from other lips than my own!

Before nightfall, however, my feelings of paternity were suppressed somewhat by the arrival of a messenger from the Controller of the Population, with an order and demand for the infant, as a child of the commonwealth and under her sole control. I refused to surrender the babe; and having explained to Nada-nana that generally speaking the status or condition of the mother determined that of her child—partus sequitur ventrem—that as long as she was sequestered from her people my official guide and companion, her offspring were separated likewise from the control of the government and the operation of the laws pertaining to infants.

It took several hours for the creature of habit for untold generation after generation to get the idea into her head that the babe belonged to her in any way or in any extent instead of wholly to the commonwealth; but after I had held the infant repeatedly to her breast, and, by pressure and palpation, encouraged the natural function of the organs, the mother was converted with the first flow of milk

into the infant's mouth; and pressing the lovely child to her bosom, she declared that she would never part with it but with her life.

The following day, another cry was heard in my palatial residence —this from the lungs of a bouncing boy; and within a fortnight or so, fourteen more; or sixteen in all—nine boys and seven girls.

In the meantime, the Controller of the Population had reported the refusal of Nada-nana and myself to surrender my first-born, (whom, in patriotic remembrance of my country on the other side of the globe, I named Mara-fata, after Martha Washington;) and in order to determine the novel question judicially, my official guide and the governess of the district was put on trial for interfering with the official duties of the Controller of the Population by witholding from her custody a certain child of the commonwealth.

My fifteen beautiful attendants simultaneously refused to part with their children; but they were informed that no action would be taken in their cases until after the court had decided the momentous issue.

I nthe meantime, also, I directed Nada-nana to convene the governing women in order that they might amend the law, which they had passed to save themselves from the Arch of Justice, so that, if they saw fit, they might suckle their own infants.

I realized that this was a revolutionary measure; but I realized also that the country was undergoing a revolution irrisistibly and inevitably, by the introduction of new blood, new ideas, new seeds, new diseases—new everything, in despite of an adamantine conservatism for aged; and it was my duty to direct it as wisely as possible—and I fancied that I could not err in assisting the mothers of the county in re-establishing their long-suppressed natural instincts and functions.

I drew up the amendment myself; and to make it general and to assign a good and sufficient cause for the same, without revealing the true cause or intimating an ulterior motive, I began with a Whereas, setting forth the inadequate supply of mega eggs to nourish the infants of the commonwealth, and the patriotic advisability of exploiting other sources of juvenile provender, and especially the natural fountains of infantile pabulum in the breasts of the mothers of the commonwealth.

The governesses, one and all, except the poetic governess Rimaroba, however, were horrified at the idea when I broached the subject to them individually on their arrival in the city; but when the score or so, who would be mothers themselves in a short time, heard one or more of the sixteen squalls that came from the infant prodigies in my palatial residence, and saw one or more of the sixteen healthy babies tugging at the breasts of one or more of the sixteen happy mothers, and caught the contagion of motherly love with their awakened instincts, there were a score or so who would vote for the amendment, I was sure.

In all which I watched the revival and evolution of the long-suppressed instincts of maternity among these superb women, with a greater delight, perhaps, than I had followed the development of the passion of love within them. Why, I cannot say, unless the answer may be involved somehow in the enthusiastic interest which I had taken in watching the germination of the seeds and the evolution of the marvelous variety of novel plants in the isolated oasis; and in

the recognition and realization which I had of the great changes that were going on in the isolated commonwealth.

However, the trial of Nada-nana came on apace before all the governing women ha dassembled to consider the proposed amendment; and I was pondering and wondering alternately over the novel and knotty question which was involved in it.

CHAPTER LVI.

The prosecutrix through her committee averred a **prima facie** case, inasmuch as a certain child had been born in the district of the city of Maro, and that, by the interposition of the governess of the district, the defendant, the said child was kept from the custody of the Controller of the Population, contrary to the laws of the commonwealth.

The defendant admitted that a child had been born and that she had interposed and kept the child from the custody of the controller, but denied that she did so contrary to the laws of the commonwealth, inasmuch as the child had been born to her, the defendant, while she, as the official guide and companion of the honored guest of the commonwealth, was exempt from the operation of all laws which otherwise might be violated by reason of such official sequestration and association; that the child was not the child of the commonwealth but the offspring of such official sequestration and association, and belonged to it until its termination—the disfunction of the mother being the disfunction of her child, as well after birth as befor.

In reply, the prosecutrix maintained that the infant was an independent being, a citizen of the commonwealth, entitled to receive an individual share of the food, shelter, care, and comforts of the communistic country, and entitled to an official tattoo and register; and in return for all these rights and privileges of citizenship, the child must be in the custody and under the control of the proper officer of the government, for the welfare of all the people, including the infant. That, the commonwealth being a communism, the child in question must be treated as all children are; for, otherwise, it would be a parasite upon the body politic, and practically and substantially a pauper **imperium in imperio**—in an individual instance, a matter of inconsiderable interest apparently, but in principle and in reality in all its involvings of vital importance to the state.

To all which, the defendant answered, that the government had created the peculiar seperation, not she; and since the state can do no wrong, it cannot be **particeps criminis**; and logically, there had been no crime committed by the agent of the commonwealth in acting by and under its authority and within the compass of her instructions—the child was a natural growth within this agency and belonged to it until its termination, nat an **imperium in imperio**, but the state itself in a delegated status.

The learned judges stroked their artificial five-colored and twisted beards with their child-like hands, twisted their curly forelocks about their little fingers, nodded and shook their monstrous masks alternately, laid the dainty forefinger of the right hand against the right side of their enormous noses, looked at one another, twitched and squirm-

ed, and finally declared that they desired to be informed as fully as possible on the natural realtions between a mother and her child, and ordered the summoning of a number of the most distinguished men of science of the country to give the court the benefit of their views, in behalf of the welfare of the commonwealth.

This was done; and several days after the intermission of the proceedings, a committee of the learned men, comprising members of the Academy of Science and professors of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, reported to the court; substantially, that human life was a continuity from an indefinite point in the past—that a child was an extension and elaboration of a part of its mother (and father), and not a separate ceration, or individual existence; and they illustrated their theory by exhibiting a peculiar plant of the country, which I recognized as a kind of a willow, saying, "As it is obvious that the buds of this plant are a continuity of the tissues of the mother, (or for that matter of both its parents;) and as these buds may be separated from the plant, and developed into other plants, and the process continued indefinitely, the continuity is not broken. Mankind, in their apparent infinite individuality, are simply and in fact the severed buds of an enormous plant-like growth benind them, which, albeit invisible, is buried in the accumulated washings and wearings of the earth's surface and may be exhumed in a myirad of fragmentary forms but still recognizable to the aye of science."

On learning which, the judges see-sawed on the bench more distractedly than before.

The prosecutrix, then, interposed that in cases of doubt as to a matter of law, the commonwealth was entitled to the benefit, as the welfare of the whole was entitled to greater consideration than that of a part.

To which the defendant responded promptly, that, accordingly, the defendant should be acquitted as the commonwealth in a special capacity or status.

Whereupon, the judges resumed their see-sawing; and they might be going up and down in a constant alternation of equipoise until today, had not the Twenty-five Governing Women of the country amended the law of the land, as I had suggested, and made the mother of a child its custodian and caretaker, if she saw fit to do so, as a kind of sub-controller of the population.

Four of the governesses voted against the amendment for obvious reasons—Zali-como, who had been sterilized as the General Superintendent of the Megas, by inhaling frequently the odor of the powerful poison which was made use of in her official capacity, as I have related and the three new members whom I had never met during the glorious but flagitious days of my unimpaired manhood; while twenty-one voted for it for as obvious reasons—Nona-nano, who had not forgotten my kisses and hopefully looked forward to my early recovery; Nada-nana, to save her neck as well as her baby, and all the others, including the big and beautiful Lota-melo, to retain the custody of the infants whom they expected to see and hear in the course of the following two or three months.

And, in fine, as the end of ther term indicated, there were thirty-five infants at the breast within the confines of Revi-lona—twenty-one boys and fourteen girls—who could squall as lustily as an equal number of infants in any part of the civilized world; and I began to think

that the time had come for me to assume the beard, the grave look, the sententious speech, and other belongings of the traditional patriarch of old; for by their crying, they evidenced a paternity that was indisputable in a hitherto voiceless community.

CHAPTER LVII.

This was the most perfect period of my existence. I was free from the debasing vices of drunkenness and treachery—albeit, like a convict in solitary confinement in a penitentiary; and from morning till night I was busy in one or other occupation that involved the welfare of th commonwealth in divers hopeful directions, first, in kissing sixteen rosy babies and their mothers in rotation, in the palatial nursery into which my resistence had been converted; then, in laboring in the botanic garden, transplanting, training, and cultivating plants, and in imparting the little I knew about horticulture and farming to the men of science who assembled there daily making drawings, taking notes, and dibbling and hoeing, as happily and tireless as so many children with a stock of new toys; and betimes, as well, in visiting the museum and lecturing informally on one or other of the many objects there which to them were so many everlasting queries of increasing magnitude and importance, and explanation of a woolen rag, for instance requiring a day—involving the natural history of the sheep, the peculiar ties of wool, and the thousand and one operations connected with its manufacture and use in divers ways; a copper kettle, another day—involving mining and metalling of; a lump of coal, and the use of the mineral, a week; the primitive of a book, and its contents, another week; and so on

Frequently, during the spring and summer, likewise, I visited the College of Physicians and surgeons (who were all men, like the judges, and the scientists, and equally foppish in their dress and formal in their manners,) and consulted with them on many professional matters, especially the mystery of vaccination and the mistake which I had made in surmising smallpox, instead of measles, and the possibility of the vaccination modifying the virulence of the latter eruptive disease, as well as the former. My attention was called to the fact, that, not only Nada-nana and my fifteen beautiful attendants had recovered from the fearful epidemic, but also a number of the others who had been vaccinated similarly—the recovery of the former, however, I attributed to the administration of castor oil and the confidence which the women had in my ability to save them; while the recovery of the latter may have been simply from a confidence in the efficacy of the marvelous remedy—confidence in the panic of an epidemic being in a measure both a prophylatic and a preservative.

During one of the conferences all the cathartics which were known to the materia medica of Revi-lona were considered, in the hope of finding a succedaneum of castor oil; and a systematic course of treatment was agreed on in the event of the disease breaking out again the following winter, which I feared.

At another time, in discussing th egrip and its effect on the mogau, and the frightful mortality among the sucklings of the commonwealth which continued during the summer, the averment was made by a

physician, who recently had returned from an investigation of the moga yards, that in one of the districts the big birds had not been affected. This district, however, was comparatively barren; and the maintenance of all the birds there was an impossibility at present, but a practicable matter in the course of time. This was a matter of the greatest importance to all, and on learning that the scantiness of vegetation in the district was owing to an excess of sulphurous gas in the atmosphere, I suggested the liberal use of sulphur in, around, and about the big poultry yards in the event of a second epidemic, an inexhaustible supply of the volcanic product and doubtful elementary substance being readily accessible at several points in the surrounding region of volcanic action of one or other kinds for ages.

In connection with which, I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration for these learned little men, whom mentally, I was about to regard as duodecimo editions in blue and gold of the ponderous folios of the medieval sages of Salerno. There was neither a crank nor a quack among them. They were excellent anatomists and physiologists; but by reason of the marvelous morality, temperance, and healthful habits of the people, and the limited number of diseases to which they were subject, the knowledge of pathology was very restricted and then treatment of disease was little more than what is involved in good nursing and the timely and careful administration of well known adjurants. The sum and substance of their theory and practice of medicine being—if it be possible to compass it in a phrase—the prevention of disease, rather than the cure of it; and the grand aim of their persistent and united efforts was to put and keep the people of the peculiar country in the best of conditions for the maintenance of their health and vigor in their several vocations.

But, to resume the thread of my story. The anniversary of the day on which I came ashore and accepted the title of the honored guest of the commonwealth, came in the meridian of the period of my perfect happiness, and Nada-nana and I, after a brief consultation, concluded to celebrate the day in a quiet way at home—that is, in as quiet a way as sixteen squalling babies, in various combinations would permit. The celebration consisted of, first, a change of apparel all round; then, an exhibition of the sixteen babies, and a careful investigation into their various accomplishments, making due allowance for the natural exaggeration—or the personal equation—of the happy mothers; then, an equable distribution of prizes, in the shape of heftings and kisses, and innumerable familiarities with the thirty-two little hands and one hundred and sixty little thumbs and fingers in my eyes, ears, mouth, nostrils, beard, and hair; then, a general repast in platoons of sixteen and seventeen respectively—the first at as many separate tables with a single kind of viand for their share of the feast; and the second, at a single table, with myself at the head, and eight beautiful women on each of the sides, and a bountiful variety of the several kinds of food of the country before us; and finally a general repose, as the thirty-three individuals severally felt disposed, the infants generally in as many degrees of sleep, and the adults in as many ways of making themselves agreeable to one another with compliments, congratulations, and kindly civilities.

Nada-nana was indescribably superb in the bloom of maternity and the glow of happiness; and paterfamilias was the personification of felicity.

But the noontide is ever an evanescent point; and the acme of our exultation was reached, the clapping of hands in the doorway announced the coming of a guest, and a most unwelcome guest it proved to be in the person of the Controller of Population.

She had come, she said, to congratulate the governess on the happy issue of the trial in which her official position compelled her to act as the real prosecutrix, behind the censor; also, to inspect the crying babies, of whom she had heard the most marvelous stories daily; and, as well, to communicate with the honored guest of the commonwealth on a matter, which, being a matter of state, she could present him only in an official interview with him and his legal guide and companion.

The controller was a superior woman in every way, big, beautiful, intelligent, resourceful, self-reliant, quick to decide and resolute to do, with most agreeable manners, and a number of pretty little winning ways of a nondescript but very effective character. She owed her position to Nada-nana; and before the trial, they had been intimate friends. Since the trial, however, they had not met; and judging from my own feelings, there was an estrangement between them, which neither perhaps could formulate in words.

The congratulations were seemingly sincere and commingled with a little pleasantry and sarcasm at the expense of the puzzled judges; and these over, she proceeded to inspect the crying babies individually and to test their vocal powers. To [illegible] greatly to the delight of the proud and happy mothers, she pronounced the infants to be the biggest for their age and the most beautiful in every way which she had seen in the seven years in which she had been engaged in inspecting the children of the commonwealth. Then she inspected the food supply of the marvelous sixteen, and was surprised and delighted to find the restoration of the age-suppressed organs complete and satisfactory in every way.

The official interview then followed, after the retirement of my fifteen beautiful attendants with the infant prodigies, including Nada-nana's; and the controller proceeded in a straightforward manner, saying, in substance, that the condition of the infants and the food supply of their mothers exceeded her expectations, and induced the enthusiasti- and with the utmost confidence to make the following official proposition to the honored guest of the commonwealth and his official guide—a proposition which she hd proposed to make in the event of finding true the half of the reports which had reached her ears—that, she, as the Controller of the Population, was the secret custodian of the only antidote known to the poison which had suppressed my paternal powers; and, provided, that I would put myself under her control absolutely for the benefit of the commonwealth, she would administer to me the antidote, restore me to my pristine vigor, and, in due time, through my agency in return, restore the long-suppressed womanhood to the women of the country and the equally long-suppressed manhood to the men

I was delighted bevond measure at the proposition, and was eager to enter into the agreement at once; but Nada-nana was distracted with a conflict and confusion of feelings and thoughts.

Her fears, I fancied, were that I would prove an unmanageable libertine and break her heart again; and I was ready to promise and vow and swear that I would comply with the agreement.

The controller, however, interrupted me by saying that she would not take my word, whether my official guide would or would not. The

matter was an affair which involved the welfare of the commonwealth and the security must be determined by the Controller of the Population, as the representative of the government in everything pertaining to the perpetuation of the people.

"What security do you require?" I demanded impatiently, and not without a foreboding that made me tremble.

"First, that you wear a sealed cage about your person which I alone shall have the authority to open officially; and second, that Nada-nana, and any two other governesses who may be found willing, will answer with their lives that the seal shall be broken only by myself."

This was a most humiliating condition to me, and a fearful one to Nada-nana, who knew my unmanageableness in such matters only too well; and, on the instant, we both refused to accept it.

"Very well," replied the controller, placidly. "Upon reflection perhaps, you may change your mind. If you do so, secure the other bondswomen, and report to me within two weeks; at the termination of which period, the proposition will be withdrawn and never made again."

Thereupon, the controller went away, and Nada-nana and I were left in a chaos of conflicting emotions, in which the lightning of burning thoughts flashed here and there with frightful rapidity.

The following morning, I suggested the advisability of sending for and consulting with the cunning Nona-nano and the influential Bara-toma; and forthwith Nada-nana signaled to them to come as quickly as possible.

I selected these two governesses for the reason that I knew the former was anxious for my recovery, and that the latter had given birth to a puny babe which in all probability would not survive a six-month; and that, possibly, the proverbial phrase was familiar to her as a principle of action, Better luck next time.

Nona-nano was the first to come; and I persuaded her easily to risk her life, saying, that in doing so she did no more than every woman when she gave birth to a child.

But the cage, the horrible cage!—how was that to be circumvented, without jeoparding the lives of the three bondwomen?

"Trust me for that," at length replied the resourceful woman. "I believe that the desire to secure you for purposes will grow with her, and before the time specified shall have expired, she will make an agreement with the three bondwomen that they shall share with her the selection of the future mothers of the children of the commonwealth; and the seal will be broken officially, accordingly, when the bondwomen desire it."

I had little faith in this; but after the arrival of Bara-toma it was submitted to her and Nada-nana, and approved.

Nona-nano thereupon called on the controller and returned in a rage, saying, "The controller refused to consider any amendment to her proposition, but added a clause which she had omitted, that she would pledge her life to the bondswomen that she would keep the honored guest of the commonwealth from bodily harm."

Bara-toma the nadvocated the calling of an extra session of the Twenty-five Governing Women and the enactment of a law compelling the controller to administer the antidote to me under penalty of death, inasmuch as I had suffered through an act of a governess, or the government *in propua persona*.

This seemed to me to be the proper course to pursue; but Nada-nana desired to know what safeguard she would have against my be-

coming an irrepressible libertine again? She was not in favor of turning me loose until I had proven myself worthy of being trusted. She had not forgotten the narrow escape which I had made when I was tried for the crime of being a tramp; and as my official guide, she believed that, in the event of recovery, I should be under restraint.

Finally, it was agreed among the prospective bondwomen that Bara-toma should call on the controller and threaten her with the proposed enactmetn if she did not come to their terms and admit them to a share in the disposal of my inestimably precious affections.

The influential governess fared worse than her associate; for when she threatened the controller with the enactment, the latter said, "If I do not administer the antidote, you will execute me under the law which you will have passed?"

"Yes,' responded Bara-toma.

"Then the honored guest of the commonwealth may be an impotent for the remainder of his life; for I am the sole possessor of the secret and will carry it with me into the boiling waters at the bottom of the ever-open well of eternal infamy."

As day succeeded day and the time for accepting the proposition was drawing to a close, the four of us were in a state of distraction bordering on delirium—I cannot say which was the greatest sufferer; but I believe that I was the least; for, in my engrossing desire to be a perfect man again, I was selfish enough to subordinate the risk of my bondwomen, and was distressed solely by the perpetual emprisonment which I was to endure under the eye of the inflexible and indissuadable controller.

During my attendance at the Georgetown Medical College in Washington City, I had heard of the curious safeguards which were in use in Europe during the Middle Ages—more than that, I had talked with men who had seen in the museum of the Hotel Cluny in Paris one of these instruments of torture which a certain knight of the cross had attached to the person of his wife with a lock and chain, and turned the key in the lock and put the key in his pocket, before setting out for the Holy Land: but I regarded the contrivance an impossibility, and a facetious fiction to account for the origin of the proverb, "Love laughs at locksmiths." I said, moreover, that, from time immemorial, a traveler had leave to lie; but in despite of my refusal to accept the safeguard as a fact, an image of the devilish device haunted me for months.

And here, where the relations between the sexes were reversed—here I was to be caged similarly!

I groaned and gnashed my teeth at the thought.

But, after all, was it not better than to live a pumpkin stud, as they say in Kentucky?—a colossal sham! **vox et preterea nihil** in as monstrous a form as the world has ever seen!

Then I recalled the stories which I had read in my youth of men who had sold their souls to the devil for worldly gain; but I could recall nothing so horrible as a man selling his manhood simply to get it! The only approach to it that I could conjure up was, a man going into slavery to acquire freedom, or, killing himself in order to live!

But the principle is organic—the desire to perpetuate the species to which an animal or plant belongs is involved in every cell of its complicated structure; and, on the last day of grace, I informed the controller that I was ready to enter into the agerement, and Nada-nama, Nona-nano, and Bara-toma came forward as my security.

The knot was tied by all the parties formally; the safeguard was adjusted and sealed; the antidote was administered; and in the course of ten days, Richard was himself again.

CHAPTER LVIII.

In the evening of the eleventh day, the controller called for me at my palatial residence; and with a sense of shame and humiliation that made my knees knock together, I staggered along by her side. She treated me kindly, however, and being one of the most beautiful and winsome of the women of Revi-Lona, I soon regained my strength, felt comfortable, and, finally, felicitously reconciled to my fate.

She took me into a darkened apartment and removed the safeguard. She then left me alone; and presently I was aware of a presence at my side—a big warm, rapturous woman; but who she was or might be in the absolute darkness, I could not determine possibly. When I caught her in my arms, however, I bit her rather severely on the right side of the neck.

The unknown visitor then went away; and the controller having returned and re-adjusted the safeguard, I was thanked, rather effusively and excitedly I thought, and sent home in the care of a confidential messenger.

The next morning, I sent Nona-nano, on some open pretence or other, to see the controller, but with secret instructions to ascertain whether or not there was a black and blue mark on the right side of her neck; and when she returned, she was purple with rage—she had seen the significant blazon.

The third evening following, the controller called for me again; and a similar sequence of events followed to those on my first visit, with the exception that I bit my unknown visitor on the left side of the neck.

And the following morning, Nona-Nano called again on the controller with secret instructions, and returned, purple and pale alternately with rage and vengence—She had seen the tell-tale mark on the left side of the neck.

A short time after this, unknown to me, Nona-Nano had a conference with Bara-toma; and in a state of excitement, they were seen by one of my attendants to go out together and in the direction of the residance of the controller.

I was informed of the fact; and fearing that the two angry women would accuse the controller of taking advantage of the agreement to satisfy a selfish rather than a patriotic motive, and point to the marks on her neck as indisputable proof, and precipitate an exposure before we were prepared for it, I begged Nada-nana to go with me and intecept them, if possible.

My official guide and companion caught the alarm at once, and we set out; and as we entered the residence of the controller, I heard a suspicious shuffling of sandals and rustling of silk in her private apartment; and without announcing our arrival by the usual clapping of hands, I rushed into the apartment and saw the final scene in the killing of the selfish woman—the almost gigantic Bara-toma standing

sternly on the breast of the prone controller, squeezing the breath of life out of her body, and Nona-nano clutching her throat with the ferocity and tenacity of a bull-dog.

"Quick! get away from the body, before Nada-nana sees you!" I said; and turning about, I intercepted my official guide before she had advanced far enough to see the murderesses in their horrible work.

A minute or two afterward, Nona-nano and Bara-toma came out of the room, the latter saying, composedly, but with savage sarcasm, "The controller has died suddenly of some mysterious affection of the neck!" Nona-nano smiled, and wriggled a sussual from head to feet: and Nada-Nana fell in a swoon.

Bara-toma, then, with great presence of mind, clapped her hands and summoned the attendants and informed them that their mistress was lying dead on the floor of her private apartment—evidently from some affection of the neck from the black and blue marks on each side of it.

"Yes," exclaimed one of the horrified attendants; "I saw one of the marks two days ago, and the other for the first time this morning; and I called the attention of all the attendants to them, and they all saw them; and we have been discussing their signifigance ever since."

"The mysterious affection, then, must have moved as quickly as the plague, going from one side of the neck to the other in a time so short, and cutting off her breath so abruptly," added the imperturbable governess.

"It seems so."

"Better summon the coroner at once, before the body gets cold and the marks of the mysterious affection disappear," suggested Bara-toma; but in the way of a command; and away ran one of the attendants after the officer of the commonwealth whose duty it was to enquire into the cause of sudden and mysterious deaths and report the same to the censor of the district.

In due time, the coroner appeared, a keen-eyed, sharp-nosed, sharp-chinned old woman; and having examined suspiciously the marks on the neck of the corpse, she went out and summoned a jury of sixteen to hold an official inquest.

In turn then the sixteen women examined the marks on the dead body, and shook their heads and looked at one another. The attendants then were sworn by the coroner, (curriously, with the down-pointing left hand the symbol of womanhood in other parts of the world besides Revi-lona, and in contradistinction to our method, with the upliftad right hand, the symbol of manhood;) and they one and all testified that they had observed the peculiar mark on the right side of the neck two days before and the similar mark on the left side that morning; and they had heard their mistress say that they gave her great pain.

This was conclusive. The jury found that the deceased had come to her death by some natural but unknown cause, to wit, a mysterious disease which affected the neck.

The verdict was given to the censor of the district; and after perusal and a consideration due to the dignity of her office if not to the document, it was pigeon-holed forever.

The body of the dead controller was swathed in a silken shroud and plastered over with sinter, and carried in a formal manner to the base of the great tower-tomb of the country. Here it was imbedded

in a sinter block and finally incorporated with the coping of the tower; and the cause was known to three persons only, the two murderesses and myself, and suspected only by the wretched heart-wrung, horrified Nada-nana.

No matter, however, the misery of Nada-nana for the moment. The safeguard was opened unofficially and cast into a sewer—The slave in chains had regained his liberty. The sun at noon looked down in a glow of delight on a man of majestic mien and might; and the earth trembled beneath his triumphant tread

CHAPTER LIX.

But murder will out, in Revi-lona, as in other parts of the world. Among the personal effects of the late controller, the agreement was found by one of the attendants and passed from one to the other till its purport somehow got into the comprehension of a score or more of the women who were attached to the great department of the population. Finally, it passed into the hands of a woman who was ambitious to succeed the murdered woman; and recognizing the influence of the persons who were involved in the mysterious affair, she brought the document to Nada-nana and proposed to surrender it to her in consideration of the influence of the three governesses and myself to secure the coveted office.

Nada-nana spurned the offer as an outrage to her honor and dignity, and threatened to report to the censor the attempt which was made to bribe her.

"Do, if you dare!" replied the woman, and walked away defiantly.

I caught this much of the conversation between the two women as I entered the ante-chamber where they were; and after the visitor had crossed the threshold, Nada-nana told me what had occurred.

In my elation over my escape, I had forgotten about the document; but no sooner was it mentioned than I realized that we were all bound by it still—the controller having signed her name in her official capacity and the office (or the king as we say) never dying her successor would have the same control over me that her predecessor had, and I would be subjected to the unfathomable mortification of the cage again!

The matter then resolved itself into the alternative, either this document must be obtained and destroyed, by fair means or foul; or a subservient controller must be elected by the governing women.

A short time after the occurrence, I was apprised also of another circumstance which had been discovered which pointed to the murder of the late controller. One of the office, in cleaning the floor where the body had lain, picked up a broken knotting-needle of mother-of-pearl—an instrument similar in shape to our crocheting-needle, and used in writing in woven textures by inserting knots in a certain sequence; and near the pieces, she observed a series of scratches on the floor which seemed to be significant, albeit broken, obscure, and irregular in the extreme. To a number of experts in decyphering the several kinds of writing in vouge in the country, however, the scratches were found by all to be the exact equivalent of the words "are killing me."

A plural nominative was inferred from the plural verb, and a murder from the word killing; and this and that put together, and the four persons mentioned in the mysterious agreement being the four persons who were found in the apartment where the body of the controller lay and was still warm—altogether the motive, the murder

and the persons involved in the crime were so glaringly apparent to me that I marveled the people did not assemble and tear the more or less guilty quartette into spiders meat in a frenzy of righteous wrath.

The exalted position of the suspected offenders, I doubt not, had much to do with the suppression of action by any of the several who had formed a definite and decided opinion as to their guilt; while the testimony of the attendants as to the marks on the neck and their painfulness was conclusive to many—several declaring that the missing plural nominative in the scratched inscription was evidently "My neck sores," or "the two sores," or the like; and that the word "killing" followed such a nominative more naturally than any other in the general sense of destroying; while in the sense of "murdering," or "assassinating," or "criminally slaying," it would be special and unusual.

However, I was in the boiling water at the bottom of the ever-open well of everlasting torments—if not of eternal infamy; and I sent for Nona-nano and Bara-toma that we might determine on a line of defence in advance of an open accusation.

The first deemed the matter of the gravest importance, and, in her fear, trembled from head to foot as noticeably as, in her mirth, she was wont to wriggle; but the imperial governess said, "Pooh!" and went out alone; and when she returned, she had in her hands the document of dreadful portent; and after she had shown it to us, to satisfy us as to its genuiness, she tore it into a thousand pieces and cast them into the sewer of the house; saying, "The ambitious woman of water! She did not dare to defy me to my face; and when I demanded the document, she gave it to me without a word! And she shall be not so much as a candidate for the high and honorable office of Controller of the Population—the presumptuous little toe of conceit!"

But there are some kinds of fire which will survive a smothering of ashes for ages, and an unavenged wrong, an unpunished crime, and the like, are of them. The destruction of the document did not destroy the knowledge of its contents; and the end of the agreement was in the future.

CHAPTER LX.

The surface of the sea of Revi-lona was now as placid as the equatorial ocean in the doldrums, or the proverbial millpond. Beneath the surface, however, there were a myriad of ideas of disorganisation at work, individually insignificant, but in the aggregate of mighty moment. Most of these came from a consideration of the events which I have related, beginning with my arrival in the harbor, and increasing in arithmetical progression ever since—a great impetus and accession coming from the establishment of the museum, with its world of wonders accumulated from the scrapings and scourings of an old whaling-vessel; and another from the successful operation of the botanic garden, in revealing a vast variety of vegetation absolutely undreamed of hitherto by the Revi-lonians and suggestive of infinite evolution in the isolated oasis.

I might have imagined this revolution going on beneath the surface, and did, betimes, in a measure; but I was concerned too much with the objective to regard the subjective, and kept my eyes above the water-level like the thousands of people around me.

During this halcyon period, also, I was the best of men in the opinion of the severe Nada-nana; and when I was not distributed as equably as possible among my sixteen children at home, I was either in the museum or the botanic garden, in conversation with the little philosophers, exchanging knowledge for wisdom, and a hodge podge of facts for harmonising theories.

CHAPTER LXI.

In the meantime, in the discharge of her duty as governess of her district of the capital city of Maro, Nada-nana had summoned her associate governesses for the purpose of electing a Controller of the Population; for which important office at all times an intelligent woman of great executive ability was required, with a conscientious regard for all the details of the complicated department, and especially at present, in view of supplying the losses which the commonwealth had sustained by the ravages of the two epidemics; and at length, the twenty four governesses from the rural districts arrived, on their big birds led by gaily-dressed grooms; and nineteen of the number of the most distinguished women of the little realm, carrying each in her arms a precious prodigy in the shape of an infant that could squall, and was not obliged to get its sustenance by suction from a stirred-about moga egg!

Then came the difficulty of getting the Twenty-five Governing Women together at the same time—for one or more of the twenty proud and consequential mothers among them would be sure to be engaged in something or other more imperious and important apparently than the object of the convention; and those who came at all could remain but a short time.

This state of governmental chaos continued for two weeks, when the minority of five who were childless for various reasons, affected to be disgusted with the conduct of their associates to such an extent that they threatened to go home, resign, report to the censor the dereliction of duty of their associates and what not; but the governesses who had not a baby in that extraordinary congress was a microscopic mite too insignificant to be regarded for an instant.

At length, to end the otherwise interminable coming and going of the governesses—like gnats bobbing up and down before one's face, in a summer evening—without organizing to effect the object of the assembly, I proposed to inspect all the babies the following day at noon at the bottom of the great Ceremonial Basin, or the Subterranean Colosseum, and award a prize to the infant which exhibited the greatest number of excellences in the eyes of the impartial patriarch—the prize to be awarded, however, not until after the election of a Controller of the Population, for which purpose they had been called together.

And, at noon the following day, not only all the governesses of the realm were in the arena of the colosseum, twenty with babies and five without, but also seemingly all the men and women whom the plague of the past winter had left alive in the city, several thousand in number, builders, boatmen, judges, clerks, cooks, storekeepers, scientists—everybody who could get away from work for a measure or two of time, to see the marvelous exhibition of mother-fed crying babies!

In my day, before I left the backwoods of Pennsylvania, I had been at several county fairs and in divers circuses and menageries and church festivities; but the aggregate of all which I had witnessed heretofore was an inconsiderable accumulation of wonders to the infinite infantile variety which filled the eyes of the fondest and proudest and most delighted of fathers on this memorable occasion!

The novelty of the scene and the excitement kept all the babies awake and bright and happy; but before I had kissed number seventeen or thereabout, (for it was impossible to keep an accurate account in the confusion,) one of the infants behind me began to cry, and then another, and then several, and still others, till the whole number of twenty were engaged in a genuine contest of vocal powers: and again the thousands on the concentric circles of seats around and above us in the expression of their admiration and approval, finger-twiddled and hissed like so many geese: but happily, on this occasion, without being misunderstood as on the former. And when they ceased to applaud, the rustling of their silken garments as they settled into repose and silence, was a more startling sound to me than the general sibilation; recalling the rush of a mighty school of fish swimming along the surface of the ocean, which I once heard to my amazement in the South Atlantic—splashing, spluttering, swishing, swashing around and about the ship—the peculiar sounds coming from so many sources as to confound direction.

I proceeded then to the twentieth prodigy; and while I was holding the beautiful babe above my head in order that the vast concourse might behold it, a little consternation began behind me from some unknown cause; and almost as quickly as heads can turn and eyes see, the great throng was staring in alarm; and before I could do anything to allay the excitement beyond standing still and holding the babe

above my head as a fixed object for confusion to settle about, like a swarm of bees on a wing-clipped queen, the panic became general; and in a few minutes the babe in my hands, and the mother of the infant clinging to me in affright, and I, in a bewilderment of stupefaction and surprise, were the only persons in the vast crater-like structure.

Presently, in the impressive silence which followed the storm of the rushing thousands, I heard a faint squeak at my feet; and looking down, I saw a young rat scampering about no bigger than a mouse; and at once I recognized in it the monster which had stampeded the congress of women and emptied the galleries with the usual expedition of a panic, but, happily, on account of the peculiar architecture of the structure, without a single accident.

The means taken to destroy the monster, too, were on a par with the panic; for, by the time I got to the level of the street above, walking as deliberately as only a man can in the presence of a mouse, a dozen streams of water from as many lines of hose were pouring into the great basin; and in the course of an hour or so, the monster was drowned in the lake of accumulated floods; and in the course of another hour or so, the poor little ratling was sucked out through the great sewer into the sea, and swallowed as a noonday luncheon by a passing minnow, for aught I know to the contrary.

The mite of a monster, however, proved to be another instance of the little hinge on which the big barn-door of empire some time swings. The congress adjourned without electing a Controller of the Population; and the sub-controllers of the several districts, without a head, became discordant, lax and negligent in divers degrees, and the commonwealth suffered greatly from the general impairment of the important department.

However, the governing women had set the fashion for all, and the governed were not slow to follow them; especially, when they learned that the law would protect them if they nurtured their own children, provided the honored guest of the commonwealth were the father of their infants. But the proviso was complied with easily by assumption, mistaken identity in the dark, and a thousand other good and sufficient subterfuges; and, theoretically at least, the honored guest of the commonwealth was co-extensive with the confines of the country! In fine, while I was the most exemplary of men in my palatial residence in Maro, I was an ubiquitous libertine in the remainder of Revi-lona!

The most exemplary of men did I say? Well so I was—it is true, however, that, betimes during the absence of Nada-nana from my side in the discharge of some official duty, I received special visits from the new members who were not in the fashion to their great discomfiture in private and public; and in entertaining them, I did the best I could to harmonize the governing body by putting them all on a plane of equality. It is true, also, that, on several occasions, I was consulted by Zali-coma, the good woman who had risked her life to save me from the effects of the villianous poison, in the hope that from my description of the antidote she might be able to procure it and be restored as well as myself. I knew only that it was a green leaf; and to be sure that she would get the precious medicine, she systematically set about to eat in succession the leaves of every plant known to grow in the country, not balking at either the thorns of the thistle or the bigness of the banana. And, of course, she found the

right leaf somewhere in her foliaceous diet for a fortnight or so; but she was never able to identify it. For that, however, she cared little; and a happier woman never kissed me in the belief that the hope of her heart would be realised.

CHAPTER LXII.

The following winter the diseases of the past re-appeared as epidemics, with a change of locality and intensity; the measles in a comparatively mild form, but fatal in many cases, overrunning the whole of the interior, and the grip, in a severe, but rarely fatal form except among the aged, taking possession of the city.

I was one of the first to sneeze in the capital; and forthwith I sent all the mogas in the city to the district in which the valuable birds were reported to have escaped the disease during the epidemic of the past season. In a short time, too, all the adult members of my family were suffering—Nada-nana and I the most seriously.

In despite of the epidemic, however, a session of the governing women was imperative to take action on the great number of petitions which had been sent to the city from every part of the country for the consideration of the legislative body.

Many of these petitions were curious and amusing, coming from ignorant persons whose imaginations had been excited unduly by the novel ideas which were multiplying everywhere, and the strange events which had happened recently in the monstrous realm for ages past; but they were all indicative of the revolution which was going on in the country.

Among the most important from the number of the signatures appended, were the following: one, signed by the professor and students of the great university of the country, praying for the establishment of a department on international law; another, signed by the boatmen especially who had participated in the late war with the most marvelous of men, praying for the establishment of an army and navy to defend the realm from foreign invasion; a third, advocating an expedition to the outside world, either by sea, or over land, or through the air, by means of hot air balloons; a fourth, more modestly, recommended in a series of expeditions to points within sight by sea and land; a fifth, recommended the decimal system, in preference to the one in vogue with sixteen as the common multiple of notation, or perfect number, as they termed it; a sixth, numerously signed by the stunted men of the country, praying fo rthe elevation of the weaker sex; a seventh, from the same scource, praying from a distinctive garb from that worn by the women of the country; and eighth, advocating man's rights generally; a ninth, beseeching governmental encouragement to such manly sports, as moko-topo, (a kind of croquet) and sami-talo, (a kind of shinny, or golf;) a tenth, advocating the enlargement of the recently introduced rat, to take the place of the moga as a beast of burden, inasmuch as the rat with its four legs might walk alternately on its two fore and its two hind legs, and never get tired—the fore legs resting while the hind worked, and vice versa; an eleventh, numerously signed by men and women of the lower classes, advocating the abolition of the courts, inasmuch as the only persons who had been

executed in modern times were among the most exalted people of the country governesses, and men of science, and the like; a twelfth, also numerously signed, advocating the execution of physicians who failed to cure; a thirteenth, signed by women only, praying for permission to wear little artificial mogas on their headgear or bonnets (in immitation of the humming bird on the captain's daughters hat in the museum;) a fourteenth, also signed by women, and presumably of great age, praying for the repeal of the late laws, on the ground, that the suckling of children would end in the subordination of the superior (or female) sex; a fifteenth, advocating the natural right of everybody to do as she (!) pleased; a sixteenth, a little more general but the same end, praying for an annulment of all the laws; and so on.

The congress, however, was interested more particularly in infants than petitions; and the governing women who had babies had such an accumulation of stories to tell about the teeth which the prodigies had cut, and the marvelously cute things which they had done, and how much they weighed, and how much they resembled their distinguished sire, etc., etc., that, finally, they adjourned, without having transacted any business at all.

At this time, both Nada-nana and I were very sick; and beleiving a change of air would do us good, I requested Bara-toma to excange districts with my official guide, for a few weeks. The imperial governess gladly consented to this; for since she had lost her child—a week or so, before the convention,—she was anxious to get away from the scene of her suffering and sink her sorrow in the novel action of one kind or other.

I took with me all my family; and while Nada-nana rode the moga of Bara-toma, carrying my precious first born, Mara-tata, the rest of us walked; and in due time, we arrived in the capital village of the imperial governess and found comfortable quarters in the government house and several others in the immediate neighbornood. Here, the grip abated rapidly; and in a few days we all were well—if, indeed, a sufferer from the insidious sapper of vitality ever recovers fully.

I enjoyed the change from the city to the country greatly; but, somehow, the happy periods of my life are of short duration, no sooner was I satisfied that I was perfectly happy and the world and all it contains just as it should be, when I learned that Bara-toma had invited all the discontended people of the country to assemble in the great Ceremonial Basin on a certain day named and formulated the reforms in the government which they desired, to the end that the governing women might take action at once.

For reasons which I felt but which were too vague and uncertain for me to encompass in words and communicate to another, I begged Nada-nana to accompany me to the city on the day of the convention, and as early as possible.

She consented to do so; but, from a number of trivial causes in themselves, we were late in starting and late accordingly in getting into the city, but not too late to witness one of the most horrible of wholesale massacres the bloody pen of history has recorded on the blackest page of the annals of crime.

Bara-toma, to end the disturbances in the country at present and for the future, concluded to destroy all the disturbing elements at once, and in her own imperial way. She accordingly, contrived the means to attain her end as nobody but herself in the commonwealth

could do; and after she had entrapped the discontented men and women, to the number of thirteen hunderd and twenty-two, into the subternanean colosseum, their destruction was comparatively easy, but horrible and ghastly in the extreme

When the unsuspecting concourse of people was listening to the disconnected harangue of an excited and enthusiastic malcontent, suddenly three hundred men issued quietly from the building about the great basin. Each carried four large bottles, two containing the poisonous volcanic fluid with which the Revi-lonanians had attempted to suffocate me on my arrival in the harbor; and two the tenacious paste or glue, with which the boatmen of the harbor had attempted to attach the sides of the vessel a sufficient number of stones to cause her to sink; and besides these four bottles, a sharpened pole which might be used either as a spear or a club. And when they came to the brim, they cast first the bottles containing the paste on the steps of all the passageways of the vast structure, in order to stop or impede the flight of all who attempted to escape; and then the bottles containing the volatile poison, in order to suffocate the panic stricken throng. At the same time, thirty men, in addiion to the three hundred, appeared with as many line of hose; and about the time the pent up people began to realize their awful doom, there were thirty streams of water playing on the poisonous fluid and diffusing it into every part of the vast crater, and accumulating at the bottom of the basin into a drowing lake.

The struggle to escape was as quick and strong and various as the nerve and muscle of as many human beings could be. but in vain: for those who escaped the gas and paste, were met by the cordon of spears and bludgeons and hurled back into the crater of death; and not a single man or woman of the thirteen hundred and twenty-two, who went into the colosseum in the hope of bettering their existence, came out alive; but all, after the lake within had been filled nearly as full of victims as it was during the plague, were sucked out through the sewer into the sea and never seen again!

Nada-nana and I came to the scene of the awful slaughter the moment after the order had been given. We saw the rush, the throwing of the bottles, the flourishing of spears, and the streams of water, but nothing more; for imagining the destruction which was being done in the great crater, which we could not prevent in any way then, we turned about and went back into the country overwhelmed with horror.

I hastened now to conclude this revolting chapter. Bara-toma having taught the people how to murder with the tenacious paste and the poisonous fluid, the following night was attacked with the same weapons in the hands of a mob; but she escaped with her life by the breadth of a hair. When the girdle of the paste was cast around her, and she found herself attached to the floor, by exerting all her strength she tore her right foot from her sandle; and springing forward on her left, she caught one of her assistants and hurled her to the ground. Then, tramping on the prostrate woman with her right foot, she extricated her left, and caught another of the mob and held her fast, while her cowardly companions escaped—all being women of the noble class; but their identity was never revealed.

The next day, the intrepid and influential governess caused the two women whom she had captured to be tried for the attempted as-

sassination and condemned to death by the terrified judges; and the day following, they were cast from the Arch of Justice into the Ever-open well of Enternal Infamy.

CHAPTER LXIII.

The suppression of the people of Revi-lona which was effected by the collossal massacre may be likened to the lull that follows an enormous avalanche or mountain slide. Almost all the adults of the commonwealth had been affected more or less by discontent; and when they found this to be an evidence of a revolutionary spirit which the government to save itself must extinguish at any cost of human life, they trembled by the thousands lest their thoughts and feelings should have become known, and they be selected for the next stupendous slaughter. Silently and sullenly they went about their work, as if their safety lay alone in the self-seclusion; looking upon their associates as so many spies, and their dearest friends as their dreaded foes.

This solitude and concentration, however, intensified their thoughts and feelings, and multiplied the dangers of a general demoralization, little uprisings here and there, larger insurrections betimes, and universal anarchy in the end. The habits of ages alone prevented this sequence and termination; and the feverish ferment was everywhere, but diffusive rather than accumulative; and the revolution, while in existence, was without shape and organs, a protoplasmic chaos.

At length, an unknown individual, more aroused, resourceful, determined, and daring, went about the country after night leaving behind him inscriptions on the sinter walls of the villages beneath a bloody hand, or an impression of an open hand bedaubed with red paint, and over, a mysterious signature "Toma-tiko," recalling Tom the Tinker, of the Whiskey Insurrection of Western Pennsylvania, to me, at once. These inscriptions were substantially the same, "There is a mighty murderess among us. The censors are afraid to report; the judges are afraid to try; and the people are afraid to act as freeborn citizens of the commonwealth. The glory of Revi-lona has departed; there is nothing now but the tyranny of one and the slavery of many!"

When my attention was called to the seditious inscription which had been put on the government house in which Bara-toma recently had resided, in an obvious menace to her, I studied the imprint of the human hand, and decided that a man had made it; and from the sequence of the inscriptions in the several villages of the country, I concluded that the daring man eluded detection by day, with his pot of red paint, by retiring to the volcanic borderland as quickly as possible after he had done his midnight work.

About this time, too, secret societies began to be formed among the women and men, for their mutual protection, and the confidence and encouragement which such combinations generally give to the timid and weak. One of these organizations became strong enough to assert itself openly in one of the districts, and led to the next important event in the overthrow of the marvelous commonwealth. It happened to be in the district of Roba-lato, whom I have described

as the counterfeit of Bara-toma—an imperial personage in appearance, but far from being so in fact—an imitator and nothing more.

To emulate her prototype, accordingly, she attempted to massacre the society which had assembled at midnight in the great communal eating-house of the village. By promises of preferment, by threats, and other means, she pervailed on a number of her attendants to surround the house and close the windows and doors with netting; and this done, and rendered more effective by throwing the tenacious paste around and about the openings, to destroy the inmates with the deadly volcanic poison.

The plan of procedure was imperfect, however, and the actors in the tragedy were suspicious of one another; and although the treacherous governess went among them and inspired and encouraged her followers by her assistance, the scheme failed in the attempt to attach the netting securely to the walls about the doors and windows. The pent up people rushed out; and when they realized the slaughter which they had escaped, they surrounded the governess and destroyed her with her own weapons—pasting her feet to the sinter street and pouring the deadly fluid into her mouth and nostrils. And seventeen of her attendants were dealt with similarly; and the first of the victories by the people against their rulers was achieved.

Happily, the babe of the governess was not destroyed by the enfuriated mob; but before I could get my hands on the sturdy boy, the sub-controller of the district had carried him away; and she having a legal right to his custody, I deemed it best to make no effort to dispossess her and excite the people further—and, besides, she had the means to nourish the child properly, which I had not.

CHAPTER LXIV.

The people who participated in this tragedy were appalled at their power and ferocity when aroused. They were fearful, also, of the legal consequences of their act; for they were without a leader, and none of them was learned in the law. Some among them, however, had confidence in me; and a few days after the slaughter, a committee, representing the society, called on me for advice and assistance.

Nada-nana was alarmed at this, and begged me to decline, on the ground that I was a guest and not a citizen of the commonwealth; but my blood was aroused in secret at the outrageous attempt to massacre these unoffending people—in imitation, evidently, of the awful deed of Bara-toma, a thought of which would send a shudder through me like a shock from a galvanic battery; and I freely told them that the laws of any of the civilized and enlightened countries of the globe would acquit them of the crime of homicide under the circumstances. It is true they had taken the law in their own hands; but there is a time, in an assault with an intent to slay, when the person attacked in self-defence may turn on his assailant and rend him to pieces. This time, however, is a matter of fact for a jury to determine; and it was their duty, as law-abiding citizens, to submit themselves to the law of the land for a vindication of their character—to stand a trial and be acquitted, on the ground that the homicide was justifiable.

"But Toma-tiko says, the judges are afraid of the mighty murderess; and they will do whatever she says. And since she began to massacre the discontented of the country, will she not continue, and thank us for saving her perhaps a little trouble by coming to the Arch of Justice before she has sent for us? Better resist now."

"No; my good friends; you will be infinitely stronger after a trial than now; and in the event of a conviction, which I do not consider a probability, you will be able to resist all the cowardly assassins whom the mighty murderess can gather around her. Be bold; be confident; and be assured that nothing can save you from destruction but a prompt appeal to the law. Compel the censor of your district at once to report your acts."

The bewildered participants in the country massacre took my advice; and the people of the commonwealth from one end to the other somehow soon got to know the fact and rejoice in it, with the single exception of Bara-toma. And in due time, the mob of men and women were tried and acquitted

Bara-toma, however, was politic enough not to reveal any antagonism o enmity to me· and when we met, she pleasantly said, "And so you have put yourself at the head of the opposition to me i the country?"

"If I have, dear governess," I replied; "then the wish of your heart has been realized; you are the Empress, and I am the Emperor of Revi-lona."

This flattered her vanity, and she acquiesced in the equal division of the petty empire between us; but from that moment, I realized that in all the subsequent commotions of the country, we would be the leaders of the opposing forces.

I believe that, at this time, I could have secured the conviction of the grand commanding woman for the massacre of the malcontents; but I permitted the loss of her child—and mine—to have a preponderating influence in her favor She was heart-wrung from the birth of the babe until its death; and when she went into the city, she was in a condition of great physical disturbance, with all the reflex resultants of mental disorder, and was not responsible altogether for her acts. Her envy of her associates, with their beautiful and healthy children, was so extreme as to verge on a mania to kill them all; and when they went away, and she was left alone in her sorrow, her special ill-will became a general hatred of humanity; and the tendency to kill developed into a homicide insanity in keeping with her extraordinary powers.

I have heard, too, that she gloated in glee over the magnitude of the massacre, and the concentrated agonies of the thirteen hundred and twenty-two victims of her envy in the artificial crater of the subterranean colosseum, filled with the poisonous gases of a real volcano; and I do not doubt it any more than I do the fact that Nero made merry at the burning of Rome, for such exhibitions of horrible hilarity are not inconsistent with certain forms of insanity.

CHAPTER LXV.

At length, the public excitement abated, and the people resumed their labors. The epidemic of grip had ceased in the city, while that of the measles continued in the country but was confined to the large schools and rarely proved fatal. Popularly, this was attributed to the vaccination which all had undergone; but being a believer in specific diseases, I doubted the efficacy of smallpox itself in modifying measles, except by removing the subject beyond the reach of rubeola by death.

The heels of the second winter, accordingly, were not so frightful as those of the first from disease, howsoever worse from the defection of the people; and when Nada-nana and Bara-toma resumed the charge of their several districts on returning to the city with my official family, (or the inner circle of the series, if you please,) I found the prospect for peace and prosperity far in excess of hopefulness beyond my expectations during the reign of terror which succeeded the massacre of the malcontents

And forthwith Nada-nana convened the governing women to elect a new member to fill the vacancy left by the destruction of Roba-lato: and also, to elect a Controller of the Population; and, as well, at my suggestion, to formulate and publish a proclamation to the effect that the laws which had sufficed to continue the commonwealth of Revilona for ages, the happiest country on the face of the globe, would not be altered by amendment or addition, except in the event of a national emergency, which was not within the scope of an outlook at present.

Nada-nana and I agreed upon candidates for both teh places; and further, that if our candidate for the higher office should be defeated, we would substitute her for the lower. And, as I expected, Bara-toma brought forward candidates for the two offices; and the congress gradually divided into two parties so nearly equal in strength as to make the contest exceedingly exciting, but happily, without creating ill-feeling. In the end Bara-toma's candidate for the higher office—Nona-nita, a woman of the rarest beauty and refinement, with whom I was fascinated at a glance—was elected; and Nada-nana's candidate, for the lower—Para-mida, a big-headed and big-hearted woman of great executive ability, who, as I believed from a study of her character for several weeks, would make an efficient official in the chaotic department at the time.

The proclamation, then, was published, and the congress adjourned —the babies having had their nine days apiece as wonders, and as wonder-workers in the war of revolutionizing the government by turning the heads of all the governing women and everything topsi-turvy in their vicinty.

Bara-toma and I were pleased at the divided victory of the election; and when I congratulated the Empress on her success, she congratulated the Emperor with a kiss, calling him, at the same time,

the grandest man that ever lived, and the only object that made existence to her tolerable in Revi-lona. I think, I had a little of an advantage in the contest, however; for the lovely Noma-nita became enamoured with the honored guest of the commonwealth at once, and fell into his enraptured arms at the first opportunity; while Para-mida looked upon Bara-toma as a monster of crime of a magnitude so great as to be incomprehensible to the people at large, and consequently regarded with awe and dread rather than with horror and detestation.

This done, and the spring now being advanced far enough to re-establish the botanic garden, I went to the wise men who were interested especially in this most useful work for the benefit of the people at large for ages yet to come perhaps, and found them in dismay and distress. The seeds of the past harvest had been stored with the greatest care in the museum, in separate jars; but during the winter, the rats, which had multiplied about the building amazingly, found access to the jars; and before their ravages were discovered, they had destroyed all the seeds of many valuable varieties and reduced the number of most of the remainder, to two, five, six and seven seeds, and several to a single grain. Happily, however, several of the original varieties were biennial and perennial plants, and the roots and stocks were still in the garden uninjured.

This was a severe blow to me—a really staggering blow; for I regarded the success of the past year one of the stepping-stones of assurance for the future indefinitely. I have been told that I wept like a child when I was informed of the destruction of the seeds; but I was unconscious of the fact, in my introspective consideration of the calamity.

I long ago had advised the extermination of the rats, as a vermin of infinite expansion and to be feared accordingly; but the little rodent was the only quadrupel in the country besides the tortoise, and so interesting in a thousand ways to the men of science—and the men generally, but not the women—that they would run the greatest risk rather than deprive themselves and successive generations after them of the sight of the extraordinary mammal, the only organic thing like themselves in the isolated oasis. Their reasons were cogent and conclusive, especially when they styled the little beasts the Little honored guests of the commonwealth, in contradistinction to me, the Big; and the ravenous rodents increased at a rate which, heretofore, perhaps, has been unequalled in any part of the globe.

The damage was done, however; and after the shock of its consideration, I went to work with greater zeal and earnestness than before—going to an extreme of caution in covering every bed of the garden wit ha protective netting.

While thus engaged, one day, I was summoned home by one of my attendants who came running to me, carrying not only her own baby in her arms but also Nada-nana's. The house had been attacked by a number of crazy boatmen, who threatened to kill me; and strangest of all, one of them was armed with the captain's double-barreled shotgun!

Leaving the panting and affrighted woman to follow me at her leisure, I set out at once in the direction of my residence, running as rapidly as I could, and as I approached the turn of a corner within fifty yards of the house, I heard two discharges of the gun in rapid

succession, but muffled somewhat as if the sounds came from the interior of a building.

Jaded as I was, I responded to the spur of the significant shots, and in a few minutes I was in the midst of a rabble of drunken boatmen about my door knocking them right and left, like so many staggering tenpins, to get into the antechamber to the relief of my imprisoned family. Shouting the while as loudly as I could with my fated breath to terrify the mob and apprize my beloved ones of my arrival. At length, on crossing the threshold, I stumbled over two dead bodies lying on the sinter floor, and fell; but I was up in an instant to see Nada-nana standing at the doorway to the inner apartments, with the gun in her hands, a statue of heroic defiance!

By main strength, as I afterward learned, she had wrested the gun from several of the mob who held to it, but did not know how to discharge it—believing that they had nothing to do but to point it to have it kill like lightning; but Nada-nana knew that more must be done; and by manipulating all the movable parts of the hammerless gun, while she pointed the muzzle toward the most daring of the invaders of her home, she succeeded in discharging it, in a measure by chance the first time, and knowingly the second, and happily with fatal results in both instances; so that she had no difficulty in keeping the mob at bay until I came.

When I found that all my family were safe, I proceeded to capture and bind the assailants, and, in a short time, with the assistance of the throng who formed a cordon about the boatmen, I had all of the living rioters made prisoners and carried off to the censor of the city; and, moreover, I was in possession of the secret to solve the mystery of their drunkenness and the possession of the gun and the attack upon me.

When the anchors of the ship were raised, several articles of waste or refuse were found attached to them; and betimes, ever afterward, curious boatmen were wont to dredge the harbor in the neighborhood of the anchorage of the vessel, finding now and then something which had been thrown overboard. And finally, one of them fished up the marvelous weapon of war of the most marvelous of men, and immediately afterward a number of the bottles of the captain's liquors which Nada-Nana had cast over the side of the ship, to keep me a sober man during the remainder of my life in Revi-lona. The mysterious fluids in the bottles were tasted, of course and eventually, a number of the boatmen became intoxicated; and several of them having been engaged in the several attacks which were made upon me, they naturally, when aroused by the liquor and emboldened by the possession of the marvelous weapon of war, concluded to attack me again and destroy me inevitably.

They found also a number of cartridges, but what became of them, I never could learn—the secret of their disposition belonging doubtless to one or other of the dead men. I was anxious to secure them; for with them I felt that I would be infinitely safer in the future. But, in all probability, they had become water-soaked and useless; while the swelling of the wadding and the paper shells in the gun-barrels had preserved the powder in the cartridges of the loaded gun. I permitted Nada-Nana, accordingly, to put the useless weapon in the museum, not only as such, but also as a trophy of her prowess.

The murderous rioters in due time were executed; but, unhappily,

the matter did not end here. Somehow—perhaps, from something I may have said to the men of science in explanation or edification—the matter of making an intoxicating drink from one or other of the vegetable products of the country became a common theme of discussion, speculation, and experiment; and in the end, somebody succeeded somewhere from the yam, or sweet potato, of the country; and another unknown, elsewhere, from the plaintain, or banana; and in a short time, several other unknown experimenters and inventors in as many parts of the country found they could manufacture an intoxicating liquor from several other kinds of their food products, by fermentation and distillation, and very easily in the neighborhood of an inexhaustible supply of boiling water from a geyser—the water, curiously, by reason of the minerals which were held in solution, being several degrees hotter than the boiling-point of pure water, as indicated on our thermometers.

And henceforth, the comprehensive subject of the use and abuse of intoxicating liquors was involved in the history of Revi-lona.

CHAPTER LXVI.

This curious application of the excessive heat of geyser water to the distillation of divers kinds of whiskey was made in the summer following the attack of the drunken fishermen and boatmen, and the multiplication of the stills followed so rapidly that at the time of the second anniversary of the eventful day on which I became the honored guest of the commonwealth, I might have drunk the health of my family of children in as many brands of Revi-lonanian moonshine, mountain dew, potteen, banana brandy, and the like; but to gratify the noble Nada-Nana, and to prove to her that through her influence I was making an effort at least to become the master of my debasing appetites, I drank their several healths in the purest of nectar from the lips of their sixteen mothers; while the rosy infants betimes drank mine in the purest of milk from the breasts of the same happy circle of the perfect number of the country.

I had one constant regret during the celebration of the day, however, that I had only the official or inner circle of my family around me; for, from the number of messages which for some weeks past had been coming in from the interior, there was an addition in the population in a corresponding number of the districts—and every one a squaller; but I kept my regret to myself; for, as I said before, I desired to prove to Nada-nana that I was making an effort at least, in the direction of reform. I believe, however, the dear, delightful woman would have forgiven me with a kiss, in appreciation of the progress which I had made in the right direction, had she known, or could she have believed, there were only ten in all; which was the fact.

About this time, and more particularly at the approach of winter, or the season of universal gloom, except where the phosphorescent paint made the houses and the thoroughfares as luminous as a semi-transparenf lamp-shade, a surprising number of mental disorders came to the surface in different parts of the country These were the resultants of the peculiar conditions of the times; and I studied them

with a strange compounding of fascination and foreboding. The past two years had awakened the dormant brains of the people, especially the stunted, suppressed, and subordinated men. Naturally, then, they would be prone to act irregularly; or, perhaps, more correctly, in accordance with the ruling passion of their several natures, or inheritances, from a long-buried past—savage, vicious, selfish, avaricious, treacherous, foolish, religious, demagogic, fantastic, and the like. Then came the general and inordinate use of the new intoxicating liquors to stimulate and embolden to self-assertion in despite of all restraint and danger; and forthwith every village had its score or more of freaks and cranks and fanatics, who were as irrepressible in Revi-lona as they have been in other countries since the dawn of history, and doubtless for an infinitely longer period. At the same time, the number of suicides increased amazingly; and cases of violent and incurable insanity.

Curiously, too, I was not the only student of the crop of mental disorders, nor perhaps the most fascinated; for Bara-toma, who had lost her second babe a week or so after its birth, found her only relief from overwhelming grief in encouraging the self-assertion of the eccentric characters of her district until the most extreme forms, short of mania, were under her especial care—reformers, abolitionists, prohibitionists, and propagandists, who were the unhappy puppets for the time being of a great variety of chimerical delusions.

At length, one of the most extreme—Baba-como, by name, and one of the most skilful of the orange-clad worm-catchers of the country, a little sinewy man about four and a half feet tall—conceived the idea that there was an infinitely better land than Revi-lona on the other side of the volcanic belt, which was illuminated in the winter by a cordon of big volcanoes—in fine, a perfect lubber-land, where plantains and other delightful fruits literally filled the valeys, without cultivation, and where men could grow to be the superiors of the women in stature and strength of body and mind. The little fanatic was an orator, too; and under the guidance and encouragement of Bara-toma, he began to preach to his fellowmen the advisability of emigrating thither in a great army and founding a new commonwealth with men only in the control of the government. Bara-toma even went so far as to inform the fanatic how eh was to get to his Utopia, by passing through a well-known gap in the volcanic belt to a well-known little oasis, which had been frequented by the lovers of romantic scenery for many centuries; and of which an exaggerated report, doubtless, was the basis of the fool's paradise.

And the fanatic, soon, under the protection of Bara-toma, not only found followers in her district, but also in every part of the country. These latter, however, had to steal away from their work by night, and subsist by plundering the stores of the commonwealth on the way. At length, the gathering of the thousands of the little followers of the little fanatic threatened to destroy the stores of the district, when, at Bara-toma's suggestion, the worm-catching Peter the Hermit assembled the crusaders and set out for the Holy Land of their disordered imagination; the governess, herself, in great state accompanying them, and supplying their wants, and seeing that none lagged behind through the faithlessness or fear.

And when the last of the happy fools had passed through the mountain gap, Bara-toma wished them a safe journey to the paradise

awaiting them, and bade them goodbye with a gush of tears. She then summoned a little army of women whom she had concealed in a ravine near the gap; and before any of the crusaders realised that their retreat was about to be cut off, the enthusiastic women built an impassable wall across the gap, with the materials which had been brought within easy reach before the army had set out on its suicidal march.

The monster of treachery, then, with a number of her equally monstrous attendants ascended the mountain side to a point whence they could survey the inevitable scene of indescribable horror in the chasm beneath them; and there they remained, with a bountiful supply of food and drink for themselves, watching the hopeless struggle for existence among twenty-seven hundred and ninety-four men!—for in the extremity of their folly, they had set out to found a new commonwealth without a single woman among them!

As I have said before, I have no heart for horrors; and I will not dwell on the prolongation of the agonies of this stupendous man-trap, until the last of the army sank in despair and exhaustion. Suffice it, none escaped; and Bara-toma returned to her district to find her act approved by hundreds of the leading women of the country, and herself advanced in influence and power everywhere.

In the meantime, too, the destruction of all the cranks and freaks and fanatics of the country, in a manner so simple, inexpensive, and complete, was a benefit to the commonwealth for the time being, as was the massacre of the malcontents; but the desperate character of the remedy only made the more glaringly plain the desperate character of the disease with which the body politic was afflicted.

CHAPTER LXVII.

The exodus of the founders of another polar paradise—which may be likened in various ways to the boy crusade in Europe during the Middle Ages—was followed by an epidemic among the men of a still more curious character to the student of humanity, and more difficult of philosophic explanation. This was a mania of self-inflicting torture in a thousand different ways—a kind of self-destruction by inches, or suicide by instalments. Some scourged themselves, like the flagellants of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Europe; some thrust the beaks of the great spiders in their quivering flesh, and others bones of fish, splinters of wood, thorns, and sharpened stakes, and paraded around in grotesque imitation of porcupines; some suspended themselves by hooks sunk in various parts of the body, while others swung themselves on a kind of a merry-go-round while hung by hooks to the spokes of the great wheel; some erected pillars, and stood on them in divers torturing positions, like so many fantastic scarecrows; some distorted their faces, limbs, and bodies, until they passed almost out of human semblance; some danced and leaped, while others went about on all fours; some laughed inordinately, while others went; and so on; while all seemingly were insensible to pain.

The only solution of the mysterious craze which I could suggest was a morbid craving for sympathy in their condition of suppression, or physical slavery, of which in the past two years they had become

aware (mainly from my stature and bulk and prominence in the country,) and out of which they were hopelessly helpless to get in their day and generation, at least. To test the matter, I induced Nadanana to have several of the most frightful-looking cases arrested as vagrants and confined where none could see their suffering; and in a short time, they began to be sensible to the hurt of their self-inflicted wounds and endeavored to relieve themselves as much as possible by removing the stakes and hooks from their flesh—the small number who were not restored to sensibility and sanity by this treatment, having passed the turning point in their weakness, and ultimately dying insane.

And in the end the general craze was cured in a similar manner. The proverbial nine days of wonder having elapsed, the torturers were disregarded by the disgusted people who had not been seized by the epidemic; and gradually the afflicted sympathy-seekers withdrew from the public gaze and either recovered or died in private—all save the laughers and weepers by turn, who multiplied amazingly, until all the male adults of the country were in hysterics! (if the term be admissible; and I have a distinct recollection that several of the medical authorities of the day hold that it is, in despite of the etymology of the word.)

To an observer, the attack was geenrally sudden; but to the patient, doubtless, there were premonitory symptoms which he neither could recognize nor relieve. By way of illustration, I may say, that having called on one of my learned friends during the height of the epidemic, I said to him, "The common salutation of the Revi-lonanians, by crossing the arms at the wrist as they approach each other, is a mystery to me. What is the signification of the act, and the origin of the custom?"

"It is a relic of our remotest past," the man replied, as calmly as usual. "At that time, slavery existed in different parts of our greatly enlarged territory, and as the slaves were bound usually at the wrists, the voluntary act of crossing the wrists was the equivalent of saying, 'I am your slave.' And after slavery was abolished, the practice was continued as a deferential ceremony and became in time the common salutation of the country. But speaking of slavery in the presence of the honored guest of the commonwealth, a man, in the fullness of his powers, I cannot but consider myself the vilest of slaves the world has ever known; and my fellow men—I pray you, man that you are in the perfection of manhood, to pity the abject slaves that we are—and overlook—the tears which betimes—in our weakness——we are forced to shed!"

And the good and wise old man began to weep violently; and after he had exhausted his lachrymal fountains, he began to laugh like an idiot; and so he continued for several days, blubbering and boohooing and tittering and grinning by turns.

And by the way, this learned man had, perhaps, the smallest hands which I observed among the intellectual men of Revi-lona—no larger than the hands of one of our two-year-old girls of Pennsylvania; and it was from him that I learned the process by which his extremities had been stunted in their growth and the reason or object which was involved in it. "Many years ago, one of our distinguished physiologists discovered the fact that the hands and feet of a man in his sleep are somewhat larger than when he is awake. This, he con-

cluded, came from a flow of the blood from the head and other parts of the body, and nourished the extremities at the expense of the head and trunk. Accordingly, he reasoned, that if the hands were bandaged and elevated during sleep, the blood which otherwise would flow in to them, would be retained in the head and other parts and develope them the more. And as the hands were deemed of little use to those who had been bred for the learned professions, law, medicine, and divers scientific specialties, and the head of the greatest use, the custom was inaugurated of diminishing the hands to enlarge the head, as much as possible; and," the old man concluded facitiously, "to enable those to ditsinguish a wise man from a fool when they met him, by the smallness of his hands, if they could not determine it from anything that came out of his head."

Howsoever, I was not the only student of the epidemic, as before; for Bara-toma, in the country, was engaged in the same occupation as I, in the city. But, unhappily for the imperial governess, she was in a condition of physical disorder, a possible subject of hysteria at any time, and an almost inevitable victim during an epidemic, albeit hitherto confined to the men of the country; and it was not long before she became the chaotic centre of a little universe of consternation in her district, crying and grimacing, and requiring the united strength of ten or twelve of her attendants to keep her in her bed.

Nada-nana and I were summoned to her assistance; and when I found that she was suffering undoubtedly from an attack of hysteria, I took Nada-nana aside, and informed her of the efficacy of the cold douche in such cases; and after I had divulged a plan of procedure, the cautious and conscientious woman agreed to assist me at the risk of making the grandest embodiment of power in Revi-lona her enemy for life.

With little trouble, I secretly succeeded in attaching securely a strong netting in front of her apartment door. I then took my place at her bedside and dismissed her attendants; and at length, when a paroxysm permitted me to act promptly and conclusively, I stripped the bed of its coverings and carried them out of the apartment, and adjusted behind me the fastenings of the netting.

I then proceeded to turn a hose of cold water on the bewildered woman; and with the first splash and dash and splutter of the fluid on her nearly naked body, she concluded that I was about to assassinate her with the volatile poison which she had used herself so successfully in the massacre of the mal-contents, and made a violent effort to escape from her apartment, throwing her great weight repeatedly against the netting, and then striving to tear the ropes with her hands and teeth, but without avail. In the meantime, I kept playing the water against the ceiling of her apartment over her head, so that the water might fall as much as possible in quantity and as forcibly on her head; and I continued to do so, in despite of threats and supplication, of tears and laughter, of coaxing and denouncing, as unfeelingly and as unintermittently as if I were simply an inanimate automatic attachment to the hose.

In about an hour, her excitement was subdued and all her movements seemingly under the control of a rational will; and in response to entreaties in a seemingly natural way, I turned off the water; telling her, at the same time, that I would turn it on again on the slightest symptom of excitement. She appeared to recognize that

what I had done was for her good, and was grateful for it. She then begged me to let her kiss me, in the expression of reconciliation; and I was about to comply, when, on turning to lay down the hose, my left arm pressed against the netting; and while my head was turned from her, she seized my arm with her teeth and bit me viciously and so severely, that unless I lose my arm by amputation, I shall carry the ugly scar to my grave.

The afflicted woman then ran into a corner of her apartment and grinned and chuckled in a demoniac glee; and presently she began to weep, and lament the outrage which she committed on the only human being whom she respected and loved, and then to sue for mercy—and pity—and, she knew not what, in the paroxysm of the strange disease which followed.

I resumed the application of water; and it was not until after I had treated her for a week, with a gradual and genuine abatement of the affection, that I ventured to remove the netting from the door and permitted her to come out of her private apartment; and not until after a period of probation of half a week more had elapsed, did I permit her to kiss me.

In the meantime, I had cautioned Nada-nana to be on her guard night and day; for the dissimulation of hysterical patients sometimes exceeded the bounds of belief of physicians of some experience.

In despite of my caution and my own vigilance, however, the practically insane woman succeeded not only in escaping from the house during an hour of general sleep, but also in carrying off Nada-nana's child, my precious first-born, Mara-tata!

The devoted mother was distracted; and the devoted father was in the same plight. We ran hither and thither and awakened all the people of the village; and a general search was instituted, but without avail.

Then, as soon as it was light enough to signal, the news of the abduction was sent from tower to tower throughout the little realm, and while our message was still on its way, we received with a shudder the fearful information that the governess in a frenzy of madness, with the child screaming in her arms, had made her way to the great tower-tomb of the country, and having passed the guard of workmen by the mere force and fury of her expression, was ascending the spiral way to the summit!

Toward the tower, accordingly, we set out in an agony of suspense lest we should not arrive in time to save our child from destruction, or to see her dashed to death by the demoniac woman in a whirlwind of delight at our utter helplessness to prevent her from gratifying her all-involving envy and vengence.

I knew not what to do, and more than Nada-nana; but in endeavoring to comfort the dear woman with hope and strengthen her for a final struggle if necessary on the summit of the tower, for the possession of the child, I gradually recovered the use of my reasoning powers and concluded that Nada-nana and our attendants must not be seen by the frantic woman, lest they increase her frenzy and precipitate the dreaded catastrophe by the mere fact of their being women and several of them mothers; and that I alone should come into the circle of her vision, and only after her frenzy had time to abate and possibly her motherly instincts of preservation excited in her bosom by the crying and hungry babe in her arms

Nada-nana acquiesced in this line of action; and having kissed the heart-wrung woman as tenderly as only a heart-wrung father can, I left her to return, while I went on alone.

At length, when I believed I could be distinguished from my size on the road by the watching and waiting woman on the tower, I walked very leisurly, stopping betimes to look at this or that, as if my mind were unoccupied by a matter so momentous as the life or death of a beloved child; and when I came to the excited workmen at the base of the tower, and happily not within the range of vision of the disordered woman. I cautioned them to be quiet and remain below while I went alone to the summit. My composure quickly affected the workmen; and I augured from this a successful issue to my agonizing undertaking.

An hour's walk brought me within earshot of Lara-toma; when summoning all the strength and courage that were left in my nearly exhausted body, I stopped and began to sing as cheerily as possible, and for the first time, I believe, since I had entered the harbor of Revil-lona.

I then went a little nearer and sang again. And a third time, I went to a point within a few yards of being within sight, and sang as before. And, presently, as I hoped, the astonished woman came around the curve of the road to a point where she could see me, and watched and listened, as I have seen a bullock in a field, half in a fright and half in a pleasurable fascination, at the sound of a passing band on the highway.

I then descended out of sight and resumed my singing, and allured her farther toward the goal of my heart's desire; until, I found that my composure was so effective and my song so enchanting, that I walked while I sang in perfect confidence that the woman was under my influence; and I continued to do so, until I had passed through a file of the astonished workmen at the base, singing cheerily, with governess as close at my heels that I could have turned and snatched the baby from her arms if I had desired to do so.

The victory was won. The hysterical paroxysm of envy and vengence was over; and the good and incommensurably great woman at heart was as gentle and balmy as a breath of spring after a belated winter, steeping the terrors of the past in a vanishing dream-like lethe, and unfolding the future in an infinity of pleasing prospects.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

On the recovery of her child, Nada-nana forthwith insisted on going home, for obvious reasons; and we set out at once.

And scarcely had we crossed the threshold of our palatial residence, when we jointly received an urgent invitation from our common friend the Controller of the Population to call on her as soon as possible after our return to assist her in unraveling a tangled skein of difficulties in her department.

Nada-nana, however, was worn out by the torturing trials which she had undergone on her trip to the relief of Bara-toma, and so overjoyed at being again in possession of her babe and in the security of her own home, that she declined to go farther than the door of the great official building of the controller, and left me to relieve the troubled woman as I could.

I have called this official the Controller of the Population; but in doing so, I have translated her Revi-lonanian title very liberally—it being literally, the Thumb of the Hand that Holds the Pearls of the Commonwealth in its Grasp. So, the official whom I have called the General Superintendent of the Mogas, in the language of Revi-lona, was the Thumb of the Hand that Holds the Mogas in its Grasp; and the officials whom I have called the governing women, or the governesses, were collectively, literally, the Nose of the Face of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona; and individually, the Nose of the Face of this or that district.

The appropriateness of all these terms was obvious to me, except the first; for the only pearls which I had seen since my arrival in the strange country, were the measures of them which were included in the stories of treasure and provisions and beautiful women which the panic-stricken people had presented to me as an inducement for me to go away, and the pendants and strings which I had observed at the ears and around the necks of the foppishly dressed philosophers, judges, and other learned men of the country. On the occasion of this visit, however, I learned the reason of the peculiar name.

For the good and great woman, (who had aged amazingly since she came into office and became involved in the general demoralization and disorganization of the country in a more comprehensive and apprehensive way than anybody else in the commonwealth,) after greeting me as a godsend, at once took me from her private apartment, (in which her predecessor had been slain,) into a corridor from which access was had to twenty-five rooms in which the records of the population of the twenty-five districts, respectively, were kept in pearls!

And all selected of two nearly uniform sizes, the smaller about three-quarters of an inch in diameter and the larger about an inch and an eighth!

These precious objects were contained in beautifully constructed trays of delicate wicker-work or matting and silk of five class colors,

each tray having sixteen rows of little compartments, having sixteen compartments in each row; reminding me of the way in which eggs are packed commonly in the United States, each egg in a separate compartment. And as each pearl represented a citizen of the commonwealth, the larger, a female, and the smaller, a male, the system of keeping the accounts of the births and deaths of the two sexes and the five classes was apparent; for when, by way of example, the birth of a blue (or nasal, or noble,) girl in the district of the city of Mano was reported, a large pearl was put into a blue compartment in one of the trays in the particular room which contained the records of the district mentioned; and when the death of an orange (or tactile) man occurred, a small pearl was removed from an orange compartment and deposited in one of the two jars in the room which contained respectively the constantly fluctuating stores of the male and female chips, or symbols.

And these pearls, by the way, as I was informed, were produced in a measure artificially by the fishermen of the country. The large beds in the warm current on each side of the harbor were planted and cultivated like the oyster beds in the bays along the Atlantic coast of the United States; and when the molluscs has attained a certain age, they were taken from the water and their shells opened gently, and a grain of a peculiar sand, found in a certain quicksand in the country, inserted in a particular part of the flesh of the animal. This done, the shellfish were replaced in the beds; and to relieve themselves of the irritation of the grain of sand which they could not remove, the molluscs covered it with the peculiar nacreous secretion wtih which they lined the interior of their shells. And, after a certain number of the years, when the fully-developed shellfish were caught again as food fo rthe silk-yielding spiders, the pearls were found and preserved or rejected, as they were of goodly size and perfect shape and lustre, or not.

To return now to the department of the controller. In each room also, there were five series of knotted cords suspended from the ceiling, to which were adjusted movable tabs; and by means of these, the aggregate ages of the several classes in the several districts were kept, by a curious system of addition and subtraction—the knots on the cords representing units in groups of sixteen; and the position of the tab, indicating the change effected in the age in a particular sex and class of a particular district.

After showing me these interesting systems of representing an ever-varying record—infinitely more elaborate and satisfactory than the tally-sticks of the English exchequer—the controller, or the Thumb, if you will, of the departmental hand, then informed me that on the day of my arirval in the harbor, the population of the commonwealth was 120,147; and that on the day of my visit, it was 100,022, or a few more than one-sixth less, and daily decreasing at an alarming rate to her.

"Yes," I repiled; "it has been apparent to me for some time past that the adult population was decreasing rapidly; and the males at a greater ratio than the females; for while both sexes suffered nearly equally by the epidemics of measles and grip, almost all the malcontents who were massacred by Bara-toma were men, and all the fanatical freaks and cranks whom the wily woman entrapped in the mountains were men, and most of the suicides lately have been men; but, to offset this great destruction of life, I have been told by several

well-informed persons, that, since the doors have been thrown open to the freest intercourse between the sexes, the birth-rate is unprecedented in the history of the country."

"It is true," the controller replied, with a sigh; "the birth-rate is unprecedented; but this is counteracted by an unprecedented death-rate, of which, perhaps, you know nothing; and presumably so, from the fact that you do not refer to it in your remarks; and it is the most disastrous subtractor of which the department has any knowledge, threatening now to exceed all the other epidemics in destroying the people of Revi-Lona."

"The latest epidemic of which I know anything is that of hysteria; and certainly you do not mean that that is the most fatal of the epidemics which has afflicted the country?"

"No; I refer to an epidemic of infanticide that counter-balances the extraordinary birth-rate at once. The moment a mother learns that her infant cannot cry, she kills it remorselessly, and frequently in open defiance of the law; and the reason of this is so just in the eyes of womankind generally, that the guilty cannot be tried and executed for the crime without destroying a majority of the mothers of the commonwealth. They say, in fine, that if the governesses can have crying babies, they, in a country of equal rights, should have crying babies, too. So, honored guest of the commonwealth, I sent for you to see ——"

"My dear controller," I broke in, impetuously; "you are as complimentary as the women of Revi-Iona at large are unreasonable, howsoever logical. You overwhelm me; I am not ——"

"But you are the most marvelous of men, to our women; and as your achievements in the past have been of incommensurable magnitude and indicative of infinite power, they believe that ——"

"Really, my dear controller, I cannot listen to you any longer; for I know that I am so much less than my reputation in apposition to the subject which is presented to me now that I am annihilated."

"I regret to hear you say so—in the excess of your modesty, I trust; but I have not come to the end of my story of the woes of the commonwealth in which I am involved by reason of my official position. Not only are the infants slain who come into the world voiceless, but all the young women, to the number of four thousand, whom the department has selected to be the mothers of the next brood of children of the commonwealth, have united in a solemn oath that they will die rather than become mothers to any father save the honored guest of the commonwealth ——"

"Then the commonwealth of Revi-Lona is doomed—hopelessly—hopelessly."

"Oh, I beg of you honored guest of the commonwealth, do not let your humble opinion of yourself lead you to despair in this very serious emergency; for over thirty-five hundred of these selected women already have assembled in the city and threaten to abduct you from your official guide and—Did you not hear a commotion in the street, just then?"

I did hear the stir; and at once I suspected the cause of it; and, moreover, that the good and conscientious controller was the chief of the conspirators.

Howsoever, I went to the window and cautiously peeped through the parting of the curtains and beheld a mob of maidens who represented the flower of Revi-Ionanian virginity—fully thirty-five hundred

in number—in a cordon around the building, and engaged in fastening the ends of several nets together so as to form a continuous enclosure not only of netting but also of beautiful women, shoulder to shoulder, supporting it; while a number of the young women stood within the circle with lassos and bolas-like hobbles to assist in my capture.

On the other side of the circle, I, perhaps, would have looked on the mob with admiration; but I at once saw that they would come closer and closer to the building, and finally leap through the doors and windows and press upon me on all sides until I would be compelled to kill the foremost of them at least to save myself.

"You have caught me in an ugly trap," I said, turning to the controller, savagely." This mob is too big to be dispersed by an appeal to reason or by threats; and what the end of it will be I cannot say—only that it will increase your death-rate amazingly"

"I am not Bara-toma!" the good woman proudly said, rising in height and expanding in width seemingly to the bigness of the governess whom she mentioned. "I would not be guilty of treachery to you for the world!"

"The circumstances are against you," I coldly replied.

"Then I will not live under even a suspicion of baseness!"

And drawing a dagger with a mother-of-pearl blade from her belt, she attempted to stab herself in the left side of the neck in the fatal region of the jugular vein and carotic artery; but a sharpely spoken word disconcerted her; and, having caught her in my arms, I snatched the weapon from her hand and threw it against the wall, breaking it into fragments.

"I believe you now," I said gently; "and I humbly beg your pardon."

"Then kiss me, and I will open a door for your escape."

I did so immediately; and repeatedly afterward, as the trembling woman conducted me into the cellar of the building, and thence through a subterranean passage to her private residence a short distance—twenty yards or so—beyond the circle of the mob

"Now, take to your heels and run into the interior of the country as fast as you can. There is no place of refuge in the city. By the mere force of numbers they will squeeze you to death if they catch you. But you certainly can outstrip them in running; and as they become scattered by lagging behind one another, your danger will be decerased gradually until it is lost."

This seemed to me the course which I should pursue to save the pursuers as well as myself; so kissing the good woman again, I was about to run out of the door, when I found that her trembling hold of me suddenly had become a rigid clutch! At the same time, I heard her teeth grind togther, and saw her eyes turn upward in their sockets; and I recognized that I held in my arms another case of hysteria in a paroxysm.

I did not think the case required the attendance of a physician, however; so, laying her down on the floor, I ran through the door and up the main street of the city, past the Tortoises and the Ceremonial Basin, and under the Arch of Justice. Here, becoming a little fagged, I looked over my shoulder to see if I were pursued and by how few, when, to my amazement, I saw the street so thronged with the excited women that I concluded, and rightly, as I afterward learned, that the whole concourse of thirty-five hundred were after me!

I thought of the classic rape of the Sabine women; but here the

relation between the sexes was reversed, and the male concentrated into one forlorn individual from the wilds of Pennsylvania—a heavy-weight sprinter, puffing and blowing betimes like a grampus to get his breath!

I thought also of a Kalmuck wooing—the maid to be won mounted on the fleetest of the horses from her father's stable, and her rival wooers on the fastest steeds which they could procure at any price, galloping behind her; but here again the relation between the sexes was reversed, and the male to be captured astride Shank's mare, of the heaviest Clydesdale build and not a Hamiltonian racer!

And then I thought of Tam O'Shanter, fleeing before the witches and warlocks of Kirk Alloway; but there was a chance for the drunken rider's escape in reaching the Keystone of the bridge before him; while there was none before me save that involved in a superiority of muscle and wind!—and Tam had only a single cutty-sark in his rear, while I had thirty-five hundred!

Great Scott! Should I not ascend the enormous tower-tomb of the country which I was approaching rapidly, to a point where I could stand like all the heroes of Thermopotae in one, and hurl the women over the precipice as fast as they came to me, necessarily in numbers not exceeding two, or three, or four, at a time?

But before I came to a conclusion, I was past the tower-tomb, and running, I knew not whither, nor cared, so be it, it was before the mob of thirty-five hundred maidens who would be mothers only on one condition—and that condition scampering away as fast as his legs could carry him, up hill and down hill, and along the level—ever within sight, but never within reach!

I thought of seeking a place of refuge in the residence of Bara-toma, who, if anybody could stop and scatter the mob, would be the most likely, by reason of her imposing presence of power personified, and her sublime courage in confronting danger; but put myself for portection behind a petticoat barricade?—I, the most marvelous of men, in bulk and resources? Never! A thousand deaths like that impeding rather—smothered with kisses or squeezed to death by thirty-five hundred of the most beautiful virgins of the world!

So, instead of turning to the right in the direction of Bara-toma's residence, I turned to the left and soon came in sight of the volcanic confines of the country.

This road I had never traveled before; and I could not recognize any of the landmarks in front of me. But, no matter; I could find my way in the region of desolation better than my pursuers, and doubtless soon escape by passing from their sight in a maze of fumaroles, mud-springs, geysers, sulphur-vats, and the like.

But the road eventually led to a narrow canon in a low but precipitous range of mountains; and to my amazement and horror, I suddenly found my way cut off by a newly-built wall across the chasm: and I conjectured at once and rightly that I had come to the wall which Bara-toma had constructed to bar the return of the fanatic founders of a masculine realm in their disordered imaginations.

I stopped at the wall, with a double shudder, if that be possible—one in contemplation of the accumulated horrors in the shape of thousands of decaying bodies on the other side of the wall; and the other, in contemplation of the crush that must come inevitably in a few minutes by the coming of the foremost of my pursuers followed by squad

after squad squeezing everybody to death before them in the narrow rock-walled canon.

The ascent to the top of the wall, however, was easy on the side to which I had come; and rather than attempt to resist the inevitable jam in the gap, I determined to enter the valley of horrors beyond and trust to my wits and good luck to get me out of the awful region again in one way or another.

So, up to the top I clambered, just in time to save myself from the clutches of the foremost of my pursuers; and down I dropped on the other side, a vertical distance of eighteen or twenty feet, on a mass of putrid humanity that emitted a gaseous stench that sickened me at once.

But a turning stomach was a trifle now; for one after another as the determined women came to the top of the wall, they dropped down as I had done, and continued the pursuit, as unmindful of the dead beneath their feet as if they were daisies.

I soon reached the farther end of the ragged ravine, or romantic valley, of you will, and began the ascent of the mountain which abruptly terminated it, clambering from leuge to ledge, and higher and higher, until I got to a point where I could survey the length and breadth of the valley at a glance.

And a glance sufficed; for I saw that it was filled with frantic women, following one another to the foot of the mountain stairway which I had ascended; and forthwith, I went on, scaling one declivity after another, until I found that I could keep from shuddering in the increasing cold only by ceaseless motion.

I then turned and looked back at my pursuers and found to my great delight that the foremost had stopped on the shelf away below me where first I began to feel chilly; and on closer inspection, I saw that the elevation which had made my blood run with a perceptible shiver, had paralyzed my pursuers who never before had been out of the equably warm climate of Revi-lona.

The darkness of night then came on apace; and I descended cautiously from ledge to ledge until I found a temperature which I could endure without suffering or danger; but from which, thanks to the increasing darkness, I could not see the reaction of the frenzied mob in the valley.

At length, I could not resist an increasing desire of drowsiness to lie down and go to sleep as comfortably as possible; so, getting down on all fours, I began to grope about for the best of beds under the circumstances, the smoothest spot on the ledge if not the softest and stumbled upon the crouching, shuddering form of the foremost of my pursuers!

I caught her in my arms; and after I had infused a new life into her by the greater and more glowing warmth of my body, I found that she was a young woman who had attracted my particular attention while I stood by the side of the old governess and watched the school-girls of her district go through their peculiar scholastic evolutions on land and water.

She informed me that she had fallen in love with me that day, and vowed that some day she either would lie in love in my arms or die in the attempt.

Her determination put her in the lead of my pursuers; and had the night been an hour or two longer, she would have succeeded and failed at the same time; for when the dawn came that we could see

our way to descend to a warmer region, she was benumbed to an extent so great that I was obliged to carry her and chafe her limbs betimes in order to keep her from freezing to death in a temperature that was exhilirating to me.

At the same time, I found a number of lichens on the rocks, of while several species to my great surprise and joy I recognized as common on the mountains of Pennsylvania,—the rock-tripe, reindeer moss, and lungwort, specially; and I ate of them greedily to satisfy the craving of my hunger, and urged and encouraged my beautiful companion to do the same.

And gradually as the day advanced, we descended among the mob which over night had been quieted by cold and hunger; and finding them tractable, I proceeded to instruct them how to escape before they should become too weak from want of food and exposure to do anything in aid of themselves.

This was to carry stones to the base of the wall across the chasm and pile them up in such a way as to form a plane, or a series of irreguar steps; but on attempting to do this, we found the stoes which could be carried by one or more of the exhausted women, were few and far apart in the ittle valley. In desperation then, I begged them to assist me in piling up the dead bodies of the fanatics around us to a height that we could clamber thence to the top of the wall; but the putrid bodies, falling to pieces in our hands, made all of us who attempted to lift them so sick that we were obliged to desist.

At this juncture, with my greater reserve of strength, and with my greater powers of resistance to the cold of the upper regions I believe I could have escaped by climbing over the mountain wall by a circuitous route; but I would not abandon the helpless thousands who gathered about me and looked upon me now as the savior of their individual lives as insanely perhaps as they had regarded me before as the preserver of the existence of their species.

And so the day stepped from horror to horror until nightfall, and the night stepped from a greater horror to a greater until dawn: when Nada-nana appeared on the top of the wall with ladders for all and provisions for a few; and these few were enabled to ascend the ladders and were saved. Bara-toma then came with an abundance of provisions; but the time for succor had passed with the majority of the wretched women, and only eleven hundred and sixty-two of the three thousand five hundred and nineteen women who entered the Valley of Death—in the pursuit of Eternal Life—came out alive; and many of them only to die of diseases which they had cotracted in the horrible trap.

The insanity of a single individual generally is a problem, of which the solution taxes the utmost powers of sanity; but the insanity of a mob of men or women surpasses the comprehension of sanity, as many surpass one.

CHAPTER LXIX.

After the survivors had been under my eye for an hour or so, on their woeful way back to the genial warmth of Revi-lona, and the food and shelter and comforts of the high civilization of the country, I missed among them the beautiful young woman who had been the leader in the disastrous man-chase; and knowing that she must be alive and left behind by some mischance, I retraced my steps to the Valley of Death; and after examining all the dead without finding her corpse among them, I sought for her in every nook and cranny of the ragged ravine; and finally, I found her concealed in a comfortable cavern into which she had carried a lot of clothing stripped from the dead to make a bed, and a supply of provisions from the surplus which had been sent into the valley by Bara-toma.

I marveled at this; and I suspected that the beautiful woman had become demented in a measure, from the excitement and exposure in the past two days and nights; but she soon relieved me of any apprehension on that score, by informing me, that, after her companions had learned that she had passed the night in my arms, they united in a common vow and threat to kill her at the first opportunity. Accordingly she concluded to slip away from her compaions quietly and remain in the awful valley until they should be scattered over the country in their several districts and her danger diminished to a degree less fearful than the place of her concealment.

I promised the young woman the protection of myself and my powerful friends, and prevailed on her to accompany me; and after we had rejoined the straggling horde of wretched virgins, I put her in the special care of Bara-toma.

And, in due time, the young women were returned to their several districts; wiser, perhaps, in a measure, but infinitely worse off, like a bow that has been oversstrained and weakened—their superb physiques having suffered a shock from which none perhaps ever recovered fully. And wherever they went, their woeful appearance and experience excited the commiseration of the people, the men as well as the women; and the effect of the catastrophic shock to a part of the community was felt soon by the whole.

This was more noticeable in the younger women, or girls, and especially those about the age of puberty; for their future being foretold so glaringy in the awful fate of their elder sisters, their fearful forebodings and ghasty imaginings in a short time produced a series of nervous disturbances, disorders, and diseases, of a most distressing character in themselves and of evil augury in the extreme to the rapidly disorganizing commonwealth and decaying people.

The epidemic was essentially chorea, or St. Vitus's dance; beginning with a perceptible twitching of the muscles of the face, an involuntary clutching of the hands, and a jerking of the arms and legs, and ending in convulsions—fatal cases terminating in the most fright-

of tetanic spasms, called opisthotonos—the body being stiffened and bent backward like a bow reversed.

And again the distressed Controller of the Population sent for Nada-nana and me, to consult with her on a remedy for the relief of the afflicted thousands.

I suggested mirth and music, and all kinds of social games and diversions, from one end of the country to the other; and these to be varied frequently and continued until the weakened bodies and minds of the patients should have time to be restored to their normal condition.

But this suggestion was impracticable. Forced mirth by forced merry-makers could not be made general with the means at hand; and games and sports were too frivolous in their character to divert the popular mind from its morbid imaginings and semi-insane delusions. Moreover, the supply of suitable food for the rapid restoration of the young women and girls was inadequate; as was also the number of trustworthy middle-aged women to administer the food to the patients, without instilling in their minds ideas and sentiments which would disturb and disorder them only the more

Finally, the conscientious controller startled me by saying abruptly, "Speaking frankly, honored guest of the commonwealth, you are the cause of all the ills which afflict and threaten the very existence of Revi-lona; and unless the cause be removed, the effect will not cease. Are you ready and willing to be sacrificed for the salvation of our beloved country?"

"By proxy, yes;" I replied, with a forced smile; "but otherwise, no; for I have a complicated and promiscuous wife to be consulted in the premises of all my comings and goings, and a numerous scattered family of children in the several districts of the country which I fondly fancy betimes are the better for a father's annual inspection at least."

At this feeble attempt at facetiousness on my part, Nada-nana frowned; and having turned toward the controller, she said to her with the severe incisiveness of a nail-cutting piece of machinery, "you have suggested the sacrifice of the honored guest of the commonwealth to him and me, in private; but if, to my knowledge, you suggest it to a third person, I will kill you as deliberately as I killed the drunken sailors who sought his death!"

The good controller was overwhelmed by this rebuke; and in apologizing, she began to stammer and then to cry and then to clutch her hands; and in a few minutes more, she was lying on the floor in a spasm of hysteria.

The suggestion of the controller and the first limb of my answer, however, were ever in my mind; and on my return to my palatial residence, I had a long consultation with Nada-nana on the advisability of my feigning death and secreting myself for a while in order that the principal factor of disturbance might be eliminated from the problem of the preservation of the government and the people of Revi-lona.

Nada-nana admitted the necessity of doing something radical and heroic—short of absolute sacrifice; and finally she consented to a sham death and burial, provided Nona-nano and Bara-toma should approve of the scheme and the plan of execution.

Accordingly, I sent for these resourceful and powerful co-adjutors

respectively; and in the end, they entered into the conspiracy for the welfare of the commonwealth.

To carry out the plan, Nada-nana and I returned with Bara-toma; and the following day Nona-nano joined us with a skilful worker in sinter. A secret workshop then was prepared in one of the moga stables near the residence of the governess; and over a framework of a number of stones lashed together and wrapped with cloth, an image of the honored guest of the commonwealth was made of sinter—the head, neck, shoulders, arms, and hands being cast from moulds made over the corresponding parts of my body. This done, the dummy-corpse was swathed in the usual way and covered with a thin coating of sinter; with the upper part of the shroud, however, left free, so that, if necessary, the head and arms of the image might be exposed; and in order to admit of transportation in the usual way, on a bier, the image was lashed securely to a suitable framework.

Leaving then my counterfeit corpse behind me in the care of a trio of disconsolate widows, I set out alone at night, with a week's supply of provisions in a wallet, and went directly to the cave in the Valley of Death in which I had found the foremost of my late pursuers, the beautiful Dora-lana.

The grotto was near a spring of good water; and I found in the cave a comfortable lodging place; and for the first two or three days, I enjoyed my solitude; for the relief which it afforded me from witnessing the distressing scenes around me in the unhappy country on the other side of the mountain. Then, to beguile the weariness of my separation from humanity, for several days, I clambered up and down the mountain sides of the ragged valley gathering specimens of all the lichens, mosses, and higher plants which I met with in my travels, and exploring all the clefts and fissures and caverns up to a height at which I became uncomfortably cold.

At length the day came when Nada-nana was to visit me; and I repaired to the trysting place in the canon on the Revi-loanian side of Bara-toma's barrier, and found her anxiously awaiting my return from the dead.

She was scandalously joyful for a widow of only a week's duration; but I overlooked it in the jubilant state in which I was as a corpse; and after she had reported to me all the events in the inner circle of my family, since my decease, she gave me an account of my falling sick suddenly at the residence of Bara-toma with a mysterious disease, and, after a brief illness, dying, to the ineffable joy of all the men of Revi-lona, but to the inexpressible grief of all the women! She then added that my corpse lay in state at the residence of Bara-toma, and was visited by throngs of women from all parts of the country, who, after stripping the body several times of its shroud to carry away mementos, were kept at a distance finally by a netting around the bier and a guard of Bara-toma's attendants night and day.

She then left me, to return at an appointed time; and I went back to the cavern, laden with the news and a fresh supply of provisions.

The following day, on going out of the grotto, I observed a woman ascending the mountain side at the farther end of the little valley; and noting that she stopped where I had found the shivering van of my pursuers, I concluded at once that the woman was Dora-lana,

heart-broken at my demise, and now on a sentimental journey to the scene of the acme of her blissful existence in the past.

I was fearful, too, that the grief-stricken woman would commit suicide, by casting herself over one or other of the precipices beneath her; and I determined to acquaint her at once of the fact of my being not only in existence but also in a situation to put her on a higher pinnacle of happiness than she had experienced yet; but how was I to do it, without frightening the young woman out of her senses and precipitating the very catastrophe which I dreaded.

I thought of calling to her, but refrained; and then, happily, I recollected the effect of my singing on the maddened Bara-toma, and concluded that I could apprize her of my presence in that way the most safely.

I began to sing, accordingly; and, after I had attracted her attention, I walked about the door of the cavern as if I had not observed her, singing betimes and then maintaining silence, and finally going into the cavern out of her sight.

As I fondly hoped, the amaxed and curious woman came closer and closer; and in the end, came into my arms; and for the remainder of my sojourn in the Valley of Death, I had the most agreeable companion in the world—a fantasy of affection in the loviiest form imaginable.

On the next visit of Nada-nana, I thought the dear mother of my first-born was a little suspicious about my indifference to the final disposition of my corpse and the time set for my resurrection and return in state to my palatial residence in the city and the inner circle of my family; but she said nothing more in the way of expressing suspicion than the simple phrase, "It is strange."

She then told me that my corpse had been carried to the great tower-tomb of the country, and laid in a frame which had been made especially for its reception and imbedded in a mass of sinter, so as to form a solid stone to fit in a particular place where it could be seen for ages as the final resting place of the most marvelous of men whom the little world of Revi-lona ever had seen. The solid stone, however, proved to be so heavy that the workmen with their usual appliances could not carry it to its proper place and adjust it; so it was left over night where it had been shaped and solidified, for a final fitting in the morning with an improved apparatus and a larger force of workmen.

That night, however, a gang of body-snatchers broke the sinter encasement of the corpse; and when they found the made-up dummy they broke it into pieces in disappointment and disgust!

The following morning, the news of what had happened spread far and wide, and Bara-toma was mortified and bewildered in the extreme; but the resourceful Nona-nana signaled to her across the country, "You see now the wisdom of our secreting the real corpse of the honored guest of the commonwealth until after the public excitement about him shall have abated!"

And this item of news also went far and wide; and it not only annulled the effect of the discovery of the bogus corpse but also led to the discovery of the desecrators of the tomb: for the body-snatchers, now, believing that they had not committed a crime in exposing a pious fraud, or in breaking into a coffin-stone which was not a

burial receptacle in fact, revealed their deed of violence themselves as an act of signal service to the commonwealth.

The censor of the district, however, thought otherwise; and forthwith she summoned for trial all the persons who were implicated in the crime of desecration of the national sepulchre, as she deemed it.

"But who were the body-snatchers?" I inquired impatiently.

"You might infer, from your knowledge of the wretches; for none but they would be guilty of an act so horrible in itself and in contemplation—the physicians and surgeons of the College in the city with whom you have been hobnobbing in fellowship ever since you came among us! They wanted to dissect you and preserve your skeleton in the ghastly collection of bones which they have made already in their special museum!"

"Well, my dear woman, that was perfectly right in them; while I freely admit, it would have been equally wrong in others. Purely professional and highly commendable my dear woman; and I trust the grand jury of the commonwealth has ignored the censor's bill?"

"No; their trial took place yesterday, and their execution at noon today—thirty-seven in all paid the penalty of their detestable crime with their lives."

I was horrified at this unexpected outcome of the deception which I was practicing. I shuddered again and again at the loss of my good and learned friends, through my deceit, albeit for the most worthy of ends, the welfare of the commonwealth; and I swore a terrible oath that I would never be guilty of deception again.

"Then, come along with me now; and we will return to the city and dare to do openly and defiantly what we think is the best to be done to stay the demoralization of the people and the disorganization of the commonwealth."

"No; I cannot until I shall have returned to my cavern in the Valley of Death."

"To practice deception still, in despite of your terrible oath."

"No, my dear woman; but to prove to you that I am true to my oath. A week ago a young woman entered the valley to destroy herself on the spot where we had met, because she believed the report which you and I had caused to be spread that I was dead. I saved her life; and from that time she has been my companion. Her name is Dora-lana.'

"I know the woman well; but no matter—were she the bitterest enemy I can imagine, I can and will greet her as a friend, so long as you dare to be open-hearted man of deeds with a high and honorable intent and motive."

I went back to the cavern; and having brought Dora-lana to my official guide, we returned to the city together—my beautiful companion in Hela, or Hades, as you will, ever afterward a member of my household, and the most trustworthy of my attendants in perilous emergencies, in the opinion of Nada-nana, by reason of her intelligence and her all-involving affection for me.

CHAPTER LXX.

I bewailed the loss of my professional friends bitterly; accusing myself of killing them, and condemning myself freely to all the tortures which remorse could inflict.

I slipped away from Nada-nana at every opportunity and frequented the places where I had commingled with the learned men: and finally, I followed their footsteps in a melancholy pilgrimage to the top of the colossal Arch of Justice, where I had never been before, and even to the brink of the most diabolically contrived Hopper of Helplessness.

Here I stood fascinated by the funnel, and finally fixed in my gaze at the Hole of Horror in the middle of the smooth and glossy concavity, imagining the fearful thoughts that possibly might flash through my mind in whirling through the aperture before I should lose consciousness in the vertical descent beneath to the Boiling Water at the Bottom of the Ever-open Well of Eternal Infamy.

But, no matter the nightmare of a moment! Better that infinitely than years of increasing misery not only to myself but also to thousands of human beings beneath me, the happiest people in the world before I came to curse them in despite of all my efforts to the contrary!

I did not intend to commit suicide when I set out; and I cannot say that I had crossed the Rubicon of a conclusion, when I came to the edge of the funnel; but my thoughts were concentrating with the curves of the concavity before me; and it is not improbable that I might have become dizzy and lost my balance on the brink of the Hopper of Helplessness and gone down a Frightful Flash of Warning to Evil-doers who might have been looking at the awful arch at that moment.

Howsoever, while I stood in suspense within a step of destruction, I was startled by the loop of a lasso passing over my head and shoulders, and a great splash of the tenacious paste of the country over and about my feet. At the same instant, I heard an infant cry behind me; and turning my head, I saw, at my heels, Dora-lana, crouching with an empty bucket in her hands, and behind her, a great group of the guards of the arch holding the open end of the lasso, and back of the guards, Nada-nana, with my first-born, Mara-tata, in her arms.

"Why! my dear friends," I exclaimed; "you act as if you believed that I was about to shoot the chute of all the chutes in the world, in this ultimatum of slides before me; and, that, my official guide not accompanying me, I might be picked up at the other end as a tramp, and puzzle the learned judges again to decide whether I was a voluntary or involuntary vagabond in my vertical movements as well as my horrisontal! But, I assure you—no matter. Pull away, and steadily, on the rope; now, altogether, every man his pound; while I endeavor to pick my feet out of this infernal paste!"

But it was not until the thongs of my sandles had been cut and the glue removed in a measure from my feet, with an application of fish-oil, that I was able to get away from the Hopper of Helplessness and walk home in my bare feet: Dora-lana sympathetically sheepish at my side, and Nada-nana behind me, formulating in silence a curtain lecture to outlast a winter's night at the pole.

My protestations and my facetiousness were equally of no avail. The circumstances were against me, being alone on the brink of inevitable destruction; and this while the epidemic of self-slaughter was increasing rather than decreasing in the afflicted country—young women drowning and hanging themselves now as frequently as the men.

At the same time, the number of deaths from a variety of diseases, especially among the half-fed children and the ill-nursed aged men and women, was greater than ever; and I began to think seriously that an end would come to the calamities of the people only with their extermination.

In the midst of the havoc around me in the country at large, however, there were health and happiness and all the comforts of life within the walls of my palatial residence; and this alone prevented me from yielding to one or other of the disorganizing and destroying influences at work beyond the boundaries of my happy home. A second crop of sixteen crying babies was harvested in due time; and while their happy mothers were engaged in ministering to the wants of the younger squad, I was kept busy for several hours a day reclining on the floor in the midst of a throng of the elder, like the statue of old Father Nilus, with the sixteen cubit-cupids about him, betimes, playing horse for as many of the toddlers as could get upon me and hold to my hair and garments or engaging in such infantile sports as pickaboo.

And when the third anniversary of the day of my arrival in the city, came along in the course of time, we celebrated it in a manner becoming the increase not only of the inner circle of my family but also the outer—the whole number of crying babies in the country, as nearly as I could get the returns from the rural districts, being ninety-two—fifty-one boys and forty-one girls.

But the grand total, while it was gratifying in the extreme to half a hundred of happy mothers and one delighted father, served only to incerase and intensify the discontent of a preponderating proportion of the people of Revi-lona, and widen the breach between the little despairing men and the big disordered women.

At this time, too, the population of the country had been reduced to 87,103; and the death-rate exceeded the birth-rate to an appalling degree.

The outlook for the coming winter was gloomy in the extreme; and I eagerly gathered the news from the messengers of the department of the population, from all parts of the country, to be advised as quickly as possible of the outbreak of any new disease or disorder that might be combated with any hope of success, or mitigation of its effects.

The stores of provisions were smaller than ever, but sufficient for the reduced population, if properly distributed and prepared for the young and old and the variously afflicted and dependent on others; and the only objective cause of a destructive character, of any great

importance, was the rapidly increasing number of drunkards in the country, neglecting their several special labors, wasting the common resources, and creating confusion in every district. But the most disastrous causes in the work of undermining the isolated people were subjective---insidiously moving beneath the surface and the impossible of detection save an **ex post facto** manner, from their effects: after the damage had been done.

At length, the unexpected happened in an epidemic among the women of the country, from fifteen to forty-five years of age, or thereabout, of lascivious dreams, or nightmares, of a character so intense and real, that the recollection of them on awakening left the unhappy victims in doubt whether they had been dreaming or undergoing the outrages which they had imagined!

And presently, one more deluded than the others, was unable to distinguish between the inner and the outer worlds of her existence, or the subjective and the objective, and openly accused a young man in the neighborhood of having made an assault upon her, beating her until she was black and blue, and finally forcing her, through exhaustion and terror to yield to his carnal passion; albeit the innocent youth was barely one-third her size and could have been strangled by her in a struggle of a moment's duration.

But no matter; the poor little fellow was seized by a mob of infuriated women and soused in a barrel of water; and under a seal of sinter, which was placed on the vessel immediately, he was left to drown or smother, as he preferred, at his leisure.

And before the epidemic ceased in the spring, as many as forty-two hundred and ninety-three warlocks were found among the youths and young men of the country and soused and sealed up with sinter in barrels of water like the first of the unfortunates to be seized!

The panic among the boys and men of all ages, which was created by this wholesale slaughter, caused many of them to drink themselves to death, others to flee to the borderland of desolation and die in the desert, and still others either to commit suicide in the extremity of their despair, or to die from affright; increasing the total of deaths attributable directly or indirectly to the epidemic of warlocks or incubi to five thousand six hundred and seventy-nine!

During this dreadful winter, the measles, the grip, and the other factors of destruction to which I have referred heretofore, were at work also; and when the spring opened and the ebb of the tide turned to a flow, the population of the country was a little under 65,000, or nearly a half less than when I entered it three and a half years before!

CHAPTER LXXI.

The following summer, the country was in a chaotic condition from one end to the other. The number of men to cultivate the fields was insufficient, uncetrain, and disorderly; and before the little harvest was gathered, a secret organization was effected among them for their mutual protection. And when the food supply for the coming winter was about to be gathered, the agents of the society secreted a large proportion of the inadequate quantity for all, cacheing it commonly in the very barrels in which their very fellows had been drowned and smothered as warlocks or incubi; the dead bodies having been removed and buried out of sight and the provisions put under the sinter seal in their stead.

At the same time, the mogas were fed and guarded imperfectly, for want of men; and betimes, numbers of them broke out of their enclosures and ravages the plantation groves, destroying infinitely more than was necessary to satisfy the cravings of their hunger. So, the providers of the food for the spiders being reduced in number, the great silk industry of the country was threatened with annihilation by the starvation of the female spinners. So, the district gangs of phosphorescent painters being cut down to less than a quarter of their former number, less than a quarter of the walls and thoroughfares of the country received their annual coating of the luminous material. And so, in fine, every occupation and operation of the country, in which men were employed, suffered correspondingly to the diminution in their number.

At length, on the fourth anniversary of the day of my coming ashore and becoming involved in the fate of the isolated commonwealth, an attempt was made to assassinate the mighty murderess, Bara-toma, in a way that led to the most disastrous results, by reason of that marvelous tendency, in certain phases of degenerating humanity, to imitate strange and mysterious crimes.

The attempt was made by a cunning woman who professed to be the most devoted of the followers of the ambitious and self-reliant governess, and in a short time became a personal attendant, having a special fondness for combing her hair and adjusting her apparel. At length, while standing behind the unsuspicious governess, alone at night, in her apartment, the wily woman threw a silken noose around the neck of the victim; and having tightened and knotted it in instant, she dexterously evaded the uncertain clutches of the strangling woman, and gained the door of the apartment. Here she stood, and, in the exultation of a savage victor, unbraided and reviled her struggling victim and gloated over her horrible agony.

The struggle was of short duration, and the governess fell to the floor; and happily, so heavily, or in such a way as to bring an unusual strain on the cord around her neck, that it broke.

The governess then met guile with guile; and pretending to be dying or dead, she waited until her exultant victor had re-entered the

apartment and placed herself beyond easy reach of the door; and when the opportune moment arrived, she sprang upon her intended assassin, threw her in a corner, and choked her to death with her hands.

The following morning, the news spread from tower to tower over the country; and in due time, an epidemic of thuggism, or garroting, (to make use of an Indian and a Spanish word, respectively, to express the method of strangulation,) prevailed to a marvelous extent, seemingly with no other end in view than to practice deceit and experiment with the usually fatal noose: the best of friends lying in wait for each other for weeks to gratify their morbid desire for secret and subtle assassination; and an end coming to the mania only with the awakening of a general suspicion which obliged the survivors to live alone.

Curiously, in this strange homicidal mania, the young, the aged, the feeble, and the helpless, were unmolested; for as the first of the female thugs sought to slay a superior in station and strength, to gratify her peculiar thirst for glory, glee, or what you will, so all her followers endeavored to strangle only those whom they regarded as their superiors in one way or other, in beauty, power, influence, good fortune, or the like. Curiously, too, the epidemic was confined to the warlock-finders of the past winter; and the women who should have been the mothers of as many children of the commonwealth, but who, for the reasons which I have stated, were barren, and substantially insane, from the disturbed and disordered condition of their organisms—the mothers without exception were unaffected by the epidemic; and happily, too, they were not endangered by it.

During the height of this frightful system of assassination, moreover, the women and children of the country generally were in a half-starved state, for want of the usual varieties of their food in sufficient quantities; and a novel series of diseases began to appear among them, and generally proving fatal, dyspepsia, diarrhoea, dysentery, enteric fevers, purpena, scurvy, boils and ulcers, and the like.

Accordingly, when the spring opened, and the country began to revive, I was not surprised to find the good and conscientious Controller of the Population, a broken-down woman, white-haired, haggard, and wretched in the extreme, who in response to my cordial greeting to encourage and cheer her if possible said, "Fifty thousand and forty-three"; and burst into a flood of tears.

In other words, during the past year the death-rate had exceeded the birth-rate nearly fifteen thousand!

CHAPTER LXXII.

By reason of the separation of the men from the women, the former were enabled during the winter to increase their dole of scanty provisions from their secreted stores without detection; and before the work of cultivating the ground began in the spring, all of the men of the interior—in fact, all of the men of the country, except the fishermen and boatmen about the harbor, and those whose labor confined them to the city—were members of the secret organization and in good physical condition; and encouraged by their success, they went to work with a will to produce as large a crop as possible, and also with a determination to get the lion's share of the harvest, whatsoever it might be.

None of the new plants had been distributed over the country yet, and few of them gave promise of being of any great utility, the cereals growing into the rankest of stalks but producing few and ill-developed seeds, the root-plants, like the beet, dwindling to worthlessness, the cabbage failing to head, and so on; but among the varieties that promiser well, a species of water-cress was the most prominent, with the tomato, lettuce, peas, and beans, coming as named in the order of their usefulness.

The cress was a savory addition to the bill of fare of the country, and relished by young and old, and especially by the scantily fed and those afflicted with scurvy; and the irrigating canals furnishing a favorable place for its cultivation with a minimum of labor, it was set out in numberless places from one end of the country to the other. The lettuce, too, was distributed widely; and being of the easiest cultivation, the seeds were sown at different times in the spring and summer, so that successive crops of the young plants might be had throughout a great part of the year.

In short the summer came and went like a harbinger of a happy return to the golden age of the commonwealth; and when the fifth anniversary of the epochal day of my becoming the honered guest of the commonwealth, came, Nada-Nana, Dora-lana, and my fifteen beautiful attendants, with their thirty-three crying babies, and the undisputable father of the company, celebrated the day in unalloyed joy in a general belief that the trials of the distracted country were over, and that a new era of happiness and prosperity had begun.

In the midst of our merriment, moreover, our common friend, the broken-down Controller called; and the medicine which she involved during her visit from her environment of health and good cheer, restored for the moment the glow to her cheek and the gleam to her eye; but alas! only for the moment, for hope was dead in the poor woman's heart.

With the beginning of winter, however, the outlook suddenly became alarming in the extreme; for, from the small supplies of food which had been turned into the hands of the official storekeepers, suspicion was aroused in several districts; and upon investigation, the fearfully portentous fact was discovered that the greater part of the

yield of the year had been secreted by the workmen for their own use during the coming winter.

The principle involved in this theft of the laborers was fatal to the perpetuity of the communistic society, for who would labor for all if his share of the common stores would be jeopardized by filching? Share and share alike is the cement of communism.

The congress of governing women at once was convened, and a proclamation issued, setting forth the danger to the commonwealth which was involved in the concealment of any part of the common food-supply of the people, and calling on all patriotic citizens to turn over at once to the official store keepers all the food in their possession, or known to them to be concealed by others; and threatening all who did not fulfill their duties as good and true citizens in the perilous emergency, with the severest penalties of the law.

The proclamation, however, had little effect in the way intended, and a great in a contrary direction; for immediately, the secret organization summoned a little army of two or three hundred men, in the district which was governed by Nona-nano, and took possession of the capital village, driving the governess and all the women of the town into the city of Mero for protection.

The village was situated on a commanding hill, and could be fortified easily; and the leaders of the secret organization had kept it continually in view as the headquarters of the society—in the event of an insurrection

Forthwith, accordingly, the secreted stores of food in the several districts of the country were carried by night to this stronghold, while, curiously the greater part of the hidden stock of illicit liquor was seized by the emissaries of the government. This, in a measure, happened by chance; for the discovery of the concentration of the secreted stores of food was made before the agents of the secret society could get to the stills, which were wholly within the geyser borderland of the country and more easily reached by the women from the capital villages of the several districts than the men from their single point of starting; the women also having control of the signal stations of the country and the means of communicating with one another with a proximate speed to telegraph.

The puzzling question then arose among the women in the several districts, what to do with the whiskey? The men, having an organized army in the field, could go at will from one village to another and recapture the precious liquor, and meet with little or no resistance. True, but there was one village in the country in which the largest army the men could muster would not dare to go—the one in which the Mighty Murderess had her official residence and overwhelmed all opposition by the force of her imperial character. And, accordingly, by common consent, without any official authority, the several lots of whiskey, under the strongest guards which the several districts could supply, were sent to Bara-toma, and stored in one of her moga stables, so that it might be as nearly undr her eye as possible.

When I was informed of the situation, I at once advised Bara-toma to treat with the insurgents and exchange their stores, or prisoners, as I facetiously called them, in order to treat the very serious matter as lightly as I could; but the self-contained governess in an emergency made no reply; and I awaited the next move on the fateful chessboard of the country in a fearful suspense.

The great woman acted alone as she had done in the massacre of the malcontents and the trapping of the fanatics; and having assembled an army of twenty-five hundred and sixty women, she put herself at their head, and marched toward the fortified village of the insurgents. They were armed with short clubs, similar to the mace of a Pennsylvania policeman; and in addition to this, each carried a sinter jug of whiskey.

The men were able to muster an army of over three thousand; and boldly they sallied out to meet their formidable adversaries, each armed with a shield of wickerwork to protect themselves against the clubs of the women, and a sharpened stake for a spear with which to stab their opponents under cover of the shield. They were confident of an easy victory over the rank and file of the women; but they dreaded the appearance of the Mighty Murderess as their general, fearful that her presence would create a panic among them.

The difference between the two sexes in battle array was very striking as they came together, the little men relying on personal bravery and the irresistible power of an organization of units impelled by a common purpose; and the big women, relying on appearance, deceit, and treachery.

For Bara-toma's wily plan of overcoming the enemy was this: Before coming to blows, the women were to flee in apparent fright, leaving their jugs of whiskey behind them; in the belief that the men would get drunk at once and become an easy prey to the women, on a second and final attack.

For the first time in her life, however, the great woman was doomed to ignominious defeat, for as the armies approached each other, so great a number of her Amazonian soldiers took a drink of the whiskey which they were carrying, to keep up their courage, that, at the moment they should have turned and fled, they were intoxicated too much to obey the command of their general, and preferred to drink long life to their adversaries rather than club them to death!

The end, accordingly, of the most extraordinary battle which the world has seen may be imagined. The opposing men and women fell into one another's arms in a bacchanatian debauch; and the mighty leader of the Amazons went home alone, like a volcanic wave rolling in the sublimity of solitude and unbroken strength over the vast expanse of the Pacific ocean.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

I was appalled at the news of Para-toma's defeat and the demoralization of her captured army, and taking Nada-nana and Nona-nano into my apartment, we considered seriously and discussed from every point of view the situation which threatened the extermination of all of us in a year or two at the farthest.

Finally, we came to the conclusion to isolate the city from the interior of the country by rebuilding the wall across the mountain chasm below the Arch of Justice, in order to have a practically impregnable fortress in which the patriotic people might gather in confidence that the government was able still to assert itself and afford protection to its adherents, with a fair share of all the food which it could collect from the interior of the country and obtain from the sea.

Nada-nana, by virtue of her position as governess, as well as for divers other reasons, was declared by the triumvirate to be the Captain General of the city, to have the charge of the construction and defence of the wall, the disposition of the public stores, the feeding of the people, and the maintenance of the strictest order and subordination, and, happily, being revered for her many excellent qualities and heroic courage, she had no difficulty in rebuilding the wall in the space of a fortnight or so, with the help of the sea-men and the city-men who did not fraternize with the men of the interior, whom they regarded as greatly inferior to them in intelligence and importance—calling them contemptuously, "Moga-droppings," "spider-dirt," "snail-slime," "hairy earthworms," and the like.

Then the honored guest of the commonwealth was made Captain General of the Interior, and authorized and empowered by the triumvirate to sally out, from time to time, with such bodies of volunteers as he could rally around him by reason of his marvelous prestige in war, and, if possible, drive the insurgents from their stronghold and recover the public stores for the preservation of all the people during the coming winter.

And lastly, Nona-nano was put at the head of the refugees from her village and district, to act as an auxiliary to the honored guest of the commonwealth, following in his wake, and taking charge of such prisoners and stores as he might secure by his prowess.

This division of the honors and duties having been made to the satisfaction of the triumvirate, I set about to manufacture a fire-drill and call into being an army of flame, with which, I believed, I single-handed would be able to drive the insurgents from Nona-nano's village in a panic and recover the public stores without the loss of a single life—an end greatly to be desired, in order that the necessary work for the good of all might be done the following summer.

After several fruitless attempts, and with the exercise of an infinite deal of patience and perseverence, I at last succeeded in kindling a fire; and then I was amazed at the ease with which I could do it again, after I had perfected my apparatus and acquired the necessary sleight. I then made the followers of Nona-nano familiar with the pho-

nomenon, in order that they might not become panic-stricken at the blaze which I proposed to make at the proper time, as well as the merry-making insurgents and their demoralized prisoners.

Next in the defence of the government, I made a requisition on the Captain General of the City for the temporary use of the ship's lanterns in the museum, for the purpose of transporting the peculiar ammunition of my army of one; and having obtained them, I hung curtains around them that the light within might be concealed; and I made use of both, in order to have two strings to my bow, for the better preservation of the feckle flame.

And at length, the night set for the sortie came, and the Captain General of the Army of the Interior, having marshalled his valiant host in himself, and taken the two darkened lanterns in one hand, and an unlit torch of huge dimensions in the other, set out to surprise the insurrectionists in their stronghold, at a time when, in all probability, they would be carousing with their bacchanalian prisoners.

The army was followed by the auxiliary horde, commanded by the wise and resourceful Nona-nano; and in due time, the former came to the selected point of attack, in the middle of the principal street of the village, where the torch could be seen the farthest and the most alarmingly; and the latter came to a halt in silence in the rear.

I then lighted the torch; and while I waved it to and fro to increase its apparent magnitude and keep it aflame, I shouted at the top of my voice.

The combined effects of the startling sight and sounds were, as I expected. The men and women rushed out of the houses in the wildest confusion and terror, casting one look of inenarable amazement at the unimaginable monster of lightning and thunder in their midst, and then running away from it along the highway in a succession of disorderly groups, their fears increasing as they commingled and clashed together, and their speed decreasing only with exhaustion.

The rout was complete, and without the loss of a single life, as I expected. And when the day dawned, the glorius news was signaled first to Nada-nana, and then to Bara-toma and the other governesses of the several districts, with a warning to look out for the mob, which, in the course of a few hours, would become desperate from hunger and be overwhelming in their might to small and ill-prepared bodies of the militia of the country.

It is true, the mob might scatter, and, in all probability, would do so, through the disintegrating effects of exhaustion and the assertion of the principle of self-preservation under excitement diversely with the individuals who composed the rabble; but it might not; and every precaution should be taken to prevent its re-organization and a realization of its formidable power still.

However, unknown to me, Bara-toma since here defeat, had been recruiting quietly another army, and had at this juncture a considerable body of women about her, who, as well as the governess herself, recognized the necessity of suppressing the insurrection at any cost, and who would fight to the death, with tooth and nail, if no other weapons were to be had.

In a few hours, accordingly, after the receipt of the news, the new army was on its way to intersept the mob of women and men, with the Mighty Murderess, thirsting for blood, at their head, and eagerly advancing to be the first to engage in a slaughter of her re-

creant soldiery as well as her former foes; but the sight of the new army afar was sufficient to scatter the mob in every direction save two—toward the unimaginable monster of lightning and thunder behind them and the awful incarnation of slaughter before them!

And, happily, Bara-toma and her Amazonian coherts were unable ot capture any of the fugitives, who were harmless now, by reason of their separation, destitution, and extreme demoralization.

I was rejoiced at this; for I believed that the welfare of the commonwealth demanded only the deaths of the leaders of the insurrection, and not their followers and the bacchantes of Bara-toma; and in the end, but two men were executed for the great crime; and I had very grave doubts that they were engaged in the little rebellion at all.

Howsoever, in due time, the public stores were distributed among the several districts of the country, and then doled out equably to all the people; and while the supply was scant, it was sufficient to dispel any fear of a famine; and as a precautionary measure for the future, the wall separating the city from the interior was retained, but pierced with a convenient passage-way for peaceful times.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

At length, the gloom of winter faded away; and the Controller of the Population was inclined to believe that the critical period in the threatening illness of her complex patient, the commonwealth, had passed; for the number of births during the past year had been in excess of the deaths, by seventy-seven.

With the revival of industry in the spring, however, a novel epidemic broke out which was perhaps the least harmful in the beginning of all the epidemics which had afflicted the country, and the most disastrous in the end. This was an epidemic of purity, the like of which has been seen frequently elsewhere on the globe, but never happily in a form so concentrated and fatal.

Somewhere in the little isolated country, a young woman of unsullied character believed that she would be contaminated and lowered in the estimation of her friends and herself, if she associated on terms of equality with any of the bacchantes of Bara-toma's first army; and accordingly, she turned up her nose at them, and refused to eat with them, or live in the same house with them, or even work with them in the same field or factory. And forthwith the pebble having been cast into the millpond, the circle of commotion created spread over the surface of the little lake, followed by a succession of concentric waves, till every drop of the water shared in the agitation of the first.

But nothing of notable seriousness followed this separation of the pure from the pariahs, until, on attempting to put several of the latter to work in their old places in one of the largest silk factories of the country, by the governess of the district, the pure girls and women refused to work with them; and the first strike in the history of the commonwealth occurred.

The news of the little industrial insurrection spread like wildfire; and all the pure spinsters of the country, to express their sympathy with the original strikers and proclaim their purity at the same time,

refused to work similarly, until they could do so without contamination and degradation to the level of the pariahs. And before anybody realized fully the danger of the original act and its limitations, the blow had fallen. The spiders were neglected; and having become ravenous from hunger, here and there numbers of the females broke loose from their ill-adjusted tethers and unlocked cages, and devoured all the males in the several districts, without a single exception, as formerly happened on two memorable occasions, as I already have related. Then the free females attacked the bound and caged, and in a short time, the survivors of the first conflict scattered over the country in search of food, here and there creating destructive panics among the mogas, and finally falling upon the great snails, and devouring them greedily, crushing the shells of their victims with their formidable tusks, and sucking out the helpless molluscs at their leisure: until all the female spiders were recaptured and taken back to the factories, to be destroyed in turn themselves as the most destructive of pests, when it was found that none of them had been fertilized before the last of the males was eaten.

The silken fabrics then in use and in the public stores became inestimably precious in the eyes of the people; and the blame of the destruction of the spiders was cast upon the parians by all the pures of the country, without a single exception. The poor women now became the most wretched of outcasts, for the bloodthirsty Bara-toma having sworn that she would kill any and all of them who dared to set a foot within the boundaries of her district all the other governesses of the interior saw fit, in the expression of their purity and vengeance against the destroyers of the invaluable industry, to publish proclamations to the same effect.

Nada-nana, the noble and the heroic, however, came to the rescue of her fallen sisters and offered them an asylum in the city of Mara, where they might live together in the houses which had been vacant since the great plague of measles, and where they, by themselves, might engage in some useful occupation to the commonwealth, such as weaving, planting, and the like.

But the miserable women, having been driven from one district to another, and subjected to every insult and indignity, instead of accepting the asylum of Nada-nana with gratitude, entered the vacant houses as if in doing so they were undergoing the final brand of degradation, and regarded themselves ever afterward as abandoned beyond all hope; and instead of treating the governess with respect, they reviled and insulted her at every opportunity.

But the worst, a thousand times over, remains to be told; and in as few words as possible; for, as I have said repeatedly, I have no heart for horrors; and I mention the gruesome events, simply because I must, in order to tell my story. The abandoned women soon allured to their houses the city-men, the boatmen, and the fishermen, and degraded them to the level of themselves; and in a short time, the several diseases, which follow close on the heels of unrestrained licentiousness and promiscuous intercourse, broke out among them, and in the end caused them to decay and die, men and women alike, like rotten sheep in a neglected corral: if the simile may be substituted for a chapter of the most loathsome of literary portrayals.

How these specific diseases were developed among the wretched people, I cannot say; for they were absolutely unknown in Revi-lona before the epidemic. Possibly, the germs might have come with the

old whaleship, like those of the measles and the grip, and remained about the harbor until the essential environment of their evolution came into being—the subject, however, is more a matter of speculation for the medical theorist, than a historian.

CHAPTER LXXV.

In the meantime, the epidemic of purity was shaping the destruction of the commonwealth in another way. The men of the interior, having become demoralized by their association with the baccantes of Bara-toma, were no longer the bashful and timid little fellows of yore, but the sauciest and most presumptuous of bantam-cocks; and the epidemically pure women and girls of the country affected to be afraid of the petty monsters of immorality, refusing to superintend their labors as usual, in the thousand and one occupations of the country—in fine, never appearing in the company of the little bantams alone, but in groups and bevies for mutual protection, coming seldom and moving slowly, and trusting one another to do this and that, and in the end, finding both undone.

And the little bantams did little or no work, when left to themselves; and when not engaged in idle and seditious intercourse, they spent the precious hours of the summer in adjusting their garments jauntily and beautifying themselves in divers ways, in imitation of the fops and dandies among the intellectual men of the city, and in strutting before and about the groups of superintending women when they came near.

And when the end of the season came, and the harvest to be gathered was so inconsiderable as to be practically nil, the little centers of confusion and alarm here and there in the fields soon widened and infringed and finally coalesced in a general consternation—the winter was at hand, and the publicgranaries were empty!

Then, in despite of every threat, the method of the men in the two preceding seasons, of secreting stores, passed to the women; and in an almost incredibly short time, substantially everybody in the commonwealth was impelled only by the principle of self-preservation, and hiding anything and everything edible, on which they could lay their hands, for their own individual use.

It must be borne in mind, too, here, in order to understand the situation fully, that, with the exception of the known relationship between the crying babies and their mothers, this was the only bond of kinship which was recognized in the commonwealth; so that the instant the communistic tie was severed, the society disintegrated into its individual elements; and it was every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost, at once, and universally in the country of Revi-lona.

I was not an exception. Albeit, I was not an individual without relations in the country, but, on the contrary, the head of a rapidly increasing **imperium in imperio**, or family in the communistic realm; and I felt it an imperative duty to provide for my family at the expense of anybody and everybody besides; and I sallied out betimes and seized whatever I could find and carried it home; Might making right; and without any delay of the law in determining the matter.

In the general scramble throughout the country, the conflicts between individuals and among groups became more frequent and violent as the fields became stripped; and as the necessity for obtaining subsistence became more and more pronounced among the improvident, the strong slaughtered the weak everywhere as the readiest and easiest way to rob them of whatever they might possess; and the most frightful reign of terror existed, from one end of the country to the other, even before the pangs of hunger and the distress and desperation of starvation were felt in reality by any.

And of all the governesses, Bara-toma was the first to realize that the possession of the only aperture known to the subterranean lake of hot water, was an incalculable power in itself, and a nucleus for a new government to come into being among the survivors of the all-involving catastrophe at hand; and with a body of several hundred men and women, who rallied around her as their only hope in the awful emergency, she rushed to the opening, captured all the fishermen with their nets and appliances, and began to build a fortified town about the place: as independent and indifferent to the fate of her associates in the government of the late commonwealth as if they had never existed.

This seemingly, however, and not in reality; for she alone among them was childless, and she hated them with the bitterness of a barren woman among mothers that has been recognized among other races of mankind than the ancient Jews. She was wise enough moreover to see that the city of Moro would be the natural asylum for all the women of the country who were blessed with crying babies: and that, under my guidance, with the boundless stores of the sea within reach, they in all probability, would survive the privations of the coming winter and be the means among themselves of founding a new government and peopling the country with a new race. Among these founders, she would be a cypher; and rather than be that the self-reliant and all-sufficient imperial personage which she had been in the past and felt herself to be in her association with others, she preferred to rule alone in the interior of Revi-lona, among the ghastly skeletons of starving wretches, throughout a winter of woe and want in the extreme, and thereafter, as the factors of the future might determine.

As the winter advanced, accordingly, all the mother governesses, with their crying children and their faithful attendants came to the wall which separated the city from the remainder of the country, and were admitted through the single narrow passage, as well as a number of men who preferred to put themselves into the hands of the most marvelous of men rather than those of the Mighty Murderess: for, in despite of my keeping Nada-nana in the front, as the only person in authority in the city, the people ignored the heroic governess and recognized the honored guest of the vanished commonwealth and the Mighty Murderess as the rival rulers of Revi-lona; and somehow, they believed, or realized instructively, that soon or late we would lead opposing armies, and in a great battle determine the future sovereignty of the survivors, by the one overcoming and slaying the other.

But while Bara-toma hated bitterly the fruitful governesses, I knew that she loved me passionately but capriciously, and dangerously betimes, when disordered in body and mind, and I trusted to my influence over her to prevent the issue which so commonly was foretold. I suspected also that she was envious of the signal victory which I

had gained in overcoming the army of men which she had failed to conquer, no matter how, to her; and I determined to be on my guard against guile at all times: not that I feared that she would attempt to slay me, but capture me, and hold me as a priceless prisoner, while she killed at her leisure all the mothers of my children, and founded with the latter a new people to suit her own imperial purpose.

But what mortal man can fathom the guile of woman? One gloomy night about the middle of the winter, Bara-toma and three of her attendants appeared at the gate in the guise of fugitives, telling a plausible story of an intolerable condition of lawlessness around the inland fishery, which Bara-toma was able to repress in a measure by her presence, but not suppress, until worn out in her vain endeavors, she had fled in despair and dismay. She was admitted with her attendants; and for the week following, she demeaned herself so naturally as a heart-broken woman that she deceived not only Nada-nano and Nona-nano and all her other governing associates, but also myself completely, in despite of my caution, I frankly confess.

At length, a decrepit old woman appeared at the gate, with a store of provisions on her back that made her stagger beneath the load. She evidently had not carried the burden far; but she would not tell anybody where she had found the food—which was a part only of a larger quantity—but myself.

I listened to her story eagerly; and as it differed in no way from others which I had found to be true of hidden stores which had been discovered by chance—the persons who had secreted them now being dead, in all probability— I determined to go back with her into the country, wit hfour men, and secure the remainder.

We walked along the half-illuminated highway slowly, the deceitful old woman at my side, and my four porters behind me, and now and then, she stooped and adjusted the thongs of her old sandals. The first and the second times she did so, I stayed my steps until she resumed her way; but afterward, I slackened my pace only that she might overtake me easily. And finally, when she had stopped for the fift or sixth time, and I went ahead, the roadway suddenly sank beneath my weight, and I was precipitated into a pit about twelve or fourteen feet in depth!

And no sooner did I realize that I had fallen into a trap, and that none of my bones was broken, than I became aware that a large body of women had sprung up from an ambush and spread a great net over the opening which I had made in the covering of the pit.

And soon after this, I was informed of the cunning contriver of the successful scheme to capture me alive, by herself, the treacherous Bara-toma, for having one of her attendants on the watch for the old woman. It was easy to escape from the city and follow my footsteps.

The wily woman told me in a few words that I was her prisoner for state purposes; and that, if I would submit to be bound and go with her peaceably, she would take me out of the pit at once and treat me as an empress should treat an emperor; while, on the contrary, if I would not submit voluntarily, she would be obliged to act otherwise to attain her end.

I choose to be bound at once. Whereupon, a woman was let down into the pit, by means of a rope; and after she had bound me, we were drawn to the surface—I first, with difficulty, and not until a number of women had been lowered into the pit and made of their bodies a platform and an upping-block on the platform.

I then was conducted to the new capital of the interior, around the opening to the subterranean lake as rapidly as Bara-toma and her Amazonian coherts could march; and after I had been put in a specially prepared prison for my reception, my arms were unbound, and I was provided with every comfort by my imperial captor.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

I was distressed at first lest my whereabouts should be unknown to Nada-nana and the inner and outer circles of my family in the city and create an agonizing anxiety among them; but Bara-toma assured me that she woman enough to glory in a victory over her rivals, and had sent back to the city my four porters with a message to the governess that I was returning her visit, and in the best of health and spirits.

After this, I submitted to my confinement patiently; Bara-toma, several times during the day, calling at the door of my prison and looking at and conversing with me through the meshes of the netting over the opening.

In the evening of the second day, a fellow prisoner was put into my commodious and luxuriantly furnished cell; and I was delighted to find on taking her arms gently from her tear-bedewed face, as I inferred from her weeping attitude, that she was, perhaps, the comliest of the attendants of Bara-toma—a beautiful, fully developed woman, but lacking the delightful innocence and unalloyed sweetness of the young women of the country on my arrival; and that she was not weeping, but affecting to hide the blushes of maiden modesty.

What crime she had committed that she should be incarcerated, I did not inquire particularly; but I suspected that she was guilty of a conspiracy with Bara-toma to render the nucleus of a new government and people in the interior absolutely independent of the seaboard community, through the agency of her fellow prisoner.

I was confirmed in this view, when, in the morning, she was liberated by Bara-toma herself, and, for the remainder of the day, assumed an importance among her associates that was significant of a secret of state, at least.

And every other evening, for several weeks, a similar culprit was put into my prison, in an affected suffusion of tears and blushes—an effect of the late epidemic of purity, I suppose; and in the morning, she was liberated to assume the airs of a founder of a new republic or commonwealth, like her predecessors.

All these women were in the best of physical condition, and I learned afterward that they had been fed bountifully by the ambitious Bara-toma, at the expense of the remainder of her subjects—many of whom were obliged to subsist on what the pampered mothers of the empire of the future turned up the tips of their consequential noses.

All this time, Bara-toma continued to call at the door of my prison, to see that all my wants were supplied, and that I was in good health and spirits; and gradually, she lingered longer and longer, looking in at me wistfully and conversing with me languidly; and I doubted not that her love was increasing to a passionate degree, and that she would desire to be a culprit herself and incarcerated over night

like her selected subjects. But knowing my superior strength, she was afraid to trust herself in my power; fearing that I might bind her, and compel her to release me to regain her own liberty, or strangle her in the conflict.

Finally, she proposed to me that if I would submit to have my arms bound, she would come in to me and prove to me that her love for me exceeded the aggrgate of that of her former associates in the government of Revi-lona.

But I declined to submit to the indignity; reminding her that she had promised to treat me as an empress should an emperor; and that if she desired my love, she must give me her confidence.

But the wily woman was not to be caught with such chaff; and in the conflict between her passion and fear, her wistful gaze passed into a self-forgetful stare of fascination, and her languid manner melted into lovesick melancholy.

At length, one day, to beguile the monotony of my prison life, I playfully raised my finger slowly in front of her staring eyes and moved it in circles and elipses, in order to disturb the fixity of her gaze and awake her from her day dream, with an amusing startle of alarm at nothing; but to my surprise, I found that she did not awake and followed all my movements with her eyes, while a blankness appeared in her countenance, from the relaxation of her facial muscles, which I had never seen before and which destroyed entirely the sublime serenity of her imperial countenance.

In fine, I found that I unwittingly had mesmerized the melancholy woman—or, rather, that she had become subject to my will by reason of her peculiar nervous temperament, as naturally as she might have fallen asleep from excessive drowsiness while staring at a star.

Howsoever, I had never mesmerized anybody; and I had never seen anyone under the mysterious influence of another's will, except when a boy at one of Professor Beamer's exhibitions in a country school house; and I was engrossed too much then in witnessing the marvelous effects of getting drunk on water, and the like, to note the manner of the cause and control of the phenomenon

I, accordingly, hardly realizing what I was doing as the recollections of my boyhood came back to me, said to the governess, "You are drunk"; and immediately, she began to leer and stagger, like her intoxicated Amezons on the day of her discomfiture as a commander-in-chief in the field. I then said to her, "You are sober, and ashamed of yourself"; and forthwith, she straightened herself, and began to weep like a repentant child I then made her do this and that, until I saw that the woman was as obedient to my will as my arm; and realizing that I might effect my escape by means of my newly discovered power when the opportune moment should arrive

I then said to the mesmerized woman, "You no longer are under the influence of my will. You are wide awake."

But the governess continued to stare at me with a look of the most solemn stupidity: and I found to my confusion, that I had forgotten the Open Sesamy to the marvelous cavern of enchantment of Mesmer!

I must take advantage of the happy chance that has come to me unawares, now, or never, perhaps, I said to myself; and I determined to make an attempt at least to escape, and that at once. So, stepping boldly in front of the governess, I said to her, "You are Bara-toma and I am the honored guest of the commonwealth. You love me, and I

love you. But your rivals Nada-nana and Nona-nano have imprisoned me here, to keep me away from you; and you have come to my prison to liberate me and take me to the city of Moro, where your rivals cannot get to me. See, here are the fastenings. Open them, and let us go, before your rivals find out what you have done, and follow us, in order to take me from you again."

The woman removed the fastenings of the netting, and I walked out of the prison; and having taken my involuntary liberator in my arms, I kissed her and assured her that I was free, and that we must set out for the city immediately.

In a few moments, we were surrounded by the attendants of the governess; but laying my hand on her shoulder, I said with my finger-tips, "these are your attendants, and they desire to accompany you—But do you say to them that you are going with the honored guest of the commonwealth to the city; and that you desire only those to accompany you who have been confined over night in his cell, since he has been a prisoner here."

The governess did so; but in a manner so foreign to her, and with a countenance so void of its accustomed expression of power and self-reliance, that they huddled together like frightened sheep; looking upon their mistress as demented, the empire of the future a baseless fabric, and themselves the subjects of the most marvelous of men as the single ruler of Revi-lona now.

But I had no time to explain the mystery of mesmerism to anybody—knowing nothing more about it than that I had a case in hand which I could control but which I could not terminate; and I set out at once, with Bara-toma at my side and a straggling group of the amazed and frightened attendants a short distance behind.

It was nearly dawn when we reached the wall; and to my surprise and alarm, I found the gate closed but unguarded by anybody in sight

I could not scale the wall, and I could not break through the gate; and being unable to proceed farther without aid from within, I was compelled to shout in order to awake the guard or summon somebody to my assistance.

The moment I shouted, however, Bara-toma awoke in bewilderment; but before she had recovered her consciousness fully, I seized her in order to hold her a prisoner until assistance should come.

At this juncture, however, Bara-toma's attendants crowded around us; and perceiving that their mistress and I were in a struggle for the mastery, they caught the contagion of a conflict in an instant, and took hold of my arms and legs and interfered with me to such an extent that Bara-toma escaped from my grasp and ran away in affright not knowing where she was, or what had happened.

Happily, too, for me that she was bewildered; for had she turned and concentrated the efforts of her attendants to my capture, she, in all probability, would have taken me back to my luxurious dungeon. They were bewildered in a measure too; for the mystery of the actions of their mistress was farther fom their comprehension now than when she seemed to them to be walking and talking in sleep; and I had little difficulty in getting away from them.

In the meantime, my voice had been heard within the walls; and in a perfect geyser-gush of joy, I was admitted by the guards of the gate.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

I found that the rigid discipline of Nada-nana had brought the people of the city through the want of winter remarkably well. There was starvation in the aggregate; but the scanty supply of food was distributed so equably that all bore an equal share of it and escaped not only death but also extreme inanition and emaciation; even the sick becoming sound, betimes, by reason of the care and consideration which was given them, when otherwise they would have perished miserably.

The number of fisherman had been increased to the limit of the available men; and the supply of fish was increasing constantly by reason of the increasing expertness of the new fishermen who were impelled by necessity to do their utmost. All however, felt the want of vegetable food, distressingly; and having observed, in my walk across the country with Bara-toma, great quantities of the rapidly spreading water-cress, growing in the warm water of the neglected irrigating ditches, I headed a cpmoany of women and went a few miles into the interior and soon gathered as much as we could carry home, and daily afterward other companies went and came, bringing loads of the precious salad till the people, in the expression of their gratitude to me for introducing the plant, called it commonly the Blessing of the Honored Guest of the Commonwealth on his adopted country, or the Blessing, for short.

At length, the time came for cultivating the fields, and I advised the governesses to come to some terms with Bara-toma, before sending our cultivators into the interior, where they could be captured and massacred easily by the Mighty Murderess, if she should be disposed to war with us, as many apprehended.

None of the governesses, however, would put herself in the power of the treacherous woman, even as an ambassadress; and finally, at the head of two or three hundred women and men I escorted a committee of the governing women to a signal tower whence they could communicate safely with the dreaded woman.

But Bara-toma declined to enter into an agreement; saying, that she was the sole sovereign of the interior since it had been abandoned by her former associates, and that she would kill any and all persons from the city whom she found breaking the close of her dominion and trespassing on her imperial preserves.

I ventured then to implore her to make partition of the fertile fields of the valley, since the yield of a moisty would suffice to feed a greater population than was to be found in both the city and the country then: but she was immovable, saying conclusively, "The mountain is not a cloud."

There was nothing now to be done, but to take as much of the interior as we desired and hold it against the selfish governess as well as we could with our limited means.

I accordingly, organized all the women of the city into an army, composed of companies having a governess for the captain; knowing

well that in the defence of her children, she would fight like a tigress, and inspire her followers with her fearless courage and ferocity in a struggle for life.

I then selected stations for them in the country; so that three at a time might be on duty, and three others very near, either coming or going; and the remainder ever in readiness to respond at a given signal, to resist a greater force than the companies in the field could stand against safely.

I also brought into requisition the whaling captain's telescope; and having trained several of the boys in its use, I stationed them on the Arch of Justice, whence they could survey the country for miles and report by signal the approach of troops and in what numbers.

For weapons, the women preferred the knife in common use, with a blade of mother-of-pearl shell; saying, that, naturally in a struggle for life, they would endeavor to catch their foe with the left hand, by her garments or hair, and then plunge the knife held in the right hand into her body.

In addition to the familiar knife, I insisted on a number of them carrying spears, composed of similar blades attached to staffs or poles, with the use of which they were acquainted; and a greater number carrying a kind of tomahawk which I had invented, by adjusting a sharp shell into a cleft handle, and then securing it firmly by means of a silken cord and the tenacious glue in common use—a formidable weapon in appearance and from its novelty more likely to strike terror than to cut flesh.

I also devised and constructed a novel weapon of war for my own use especially; for the nature of the material employed made the use of it absolutely incompatible with the sex of my soldiers. In fact, I was obliged to keep the secret of my marvelous machine from my own army as well as that of the enemy.

The invention was a kind of a catapult, or ballista, modeled after the simple apparatus in common use among the bad boys of Pennsylvania in what they call sky-toading; but instead of living toads, my contrivance was designed to hurl living rats in the air so that they might fall in the ranks of the enemy and create a panic at once.

And perhaps in the long range of the history of projectiles, from Greek fire and Chinese stink-pots to dynamite bombs, a shell containing living rats is the most curious, as it was the most effective in demoralizing an army—But not to anticipate.

I had little trouble in procuring the empty shells for my mortar, for the sinter jugs in common use answered the purpose fully, being hard enough to withstand the gnawing of the rodents and brittle enough to break on striking the ground from a fall of fifteen feet or thereabout; and I had less trouble, perhaps, in getting the rats; for the little mammals had multiplied amazingly in the city and threatened to be the next of the plagues to afflict the people, as they did of old the city of Abdera, and, in more modern times, the city of Mentz, in which the stony-hearted Archbishop Hatto ruled, and the mystic realm in which Whittington with his cat laid the foundation of his great fortune.

I put a single rat in each jug, only; for two or more I found would kill one another in a short time. And after I had passed the little beast through the opening head-foremost, I partly closed the aperature with sinter, leaving a hole big enough only for the neccesaries

of life to enter, food and drink and air, without permitting the escape of the prisoner.

And having completed my catapult, and tested its range, and provided myself with a number of loaded shells, I put them in a convenient place near the great highway of the interior on which I assumed the army of the enemy would come in due time to destroy our cultivated fields and drive our laborers and their guards into the city.

At length, a large army was descried in the distance by the boys with the glass on the Arch of Justice, and reported to me by signaling; and in a short time, I had all my companies stationed in their several appointed places; so that, in the event of failure with my unknown apparatus to them, we would be prepared to resist the attack and able to vanquish the enemy, as I believed, from the perfection of my organization and the principle of self-preservation which animated them and made them conquerable only by extermination.

I repaired to my catapult alone, and confidently awaited the army of Amazons with the Mighty Murderess at their head; and seeing me alone and seemingly unarmed, the great body of well-drilled women came within the range of my projectiles. I then summoned them to halt and go back; at the same time, threatening them with destruction, if they did not.

Bara-toma was not dismayed at this; and commanded the van to rush upon me and seize me, before I could get back to my forces in the rear.

At the first movement of the van toward me, however, I discharged the first shell; and as it shot into the air, the astonished Amazons followed it with their eyes; and when it fell among them, and the rat escaped, a bursting shell of shrapnel never created a greater confusion.

At the same time, jug after jug was going through the air, and breaking in the ranks of the army; and rat after rat was spreading terror, until the confusion became general, and the army turned and fled in a panic—Bara-toma herself in the van of the retreat as she had been in the advance.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

This was the second defeat which Bara-toma had sustained in war, without the loss of a single life; and I hoped that she would acquiesce in the situation and agree to an armistice and an amicable settlement of the sovereignty of the isolated oasis. But discomfiture made her the more indisuadable and inexorable; and it was not long before she appeared in the field again, at the head of what appeared to be a regiment intended more for harrassing and keeping us in a constant state of alarm, than attacking us boldly with any hope of victory.

In this she succeeded admirably; for her presence not only prevented the laborers from going to work, but also exhausted my army to an alarming degree; and I was obliged to limit the force in the field to a number sufficient only to cope with the enemy in sight, in order that the remainder might recruit their strength by rest and relaxation.

No sooner was this done, however, than the wily woman, who had been maneuvering to bring about this very separation of my forces, made an attack, just before the break of day, on the middle one of my three companies on guard; and this brought the others to the relief of the one engaged.

The clash of the conflict also brought back to the field the three companies which had been relieved a little while before, and were about to lie down to sleep. The force was sufficient to overwhelm Bara-toma's regiment; and my Amazons went into the engagement in the expectation of repulsing the enemy easily.

For this also the wily woman had planned; and as soon as she perceived that my six companies were crowding together with the enthusiasm of over-confidence, she retreated precipitately, and my troops —unmindful of my injunctions, repeated a thousand times—followed furiously.

In the meantime, two divisions of Bara-toma's large army, which had been marched to the expected scene of action under cover of the night and were stationed on the flanks of the decoying regiment, closed on the sides and in the rear of the pursuers and slaughtered all whom they encountered without mercy. At this juncture, Bara-toma turned in her flight and completed the circle around my confounded troops; and after giving them a little time to huddle together in the center like a flock of frightened sheep, she ordered a simultaneous attack from all sides, and a deliberate butchery of the helpless victims of their own folly as well as the wisdom of their enemy, began, and ended not until all were slain, save eleven alone. These were mothers who had left their children behind them; and having united with a common impulse, they formed a little invincible army that literally cleft its way, with the shell-bladed tomahawks with which it was provided, through the encircling ranks of Bara-toma's bloody followers.

The decisive victory gained, Bara-toma might have attacked the

city with many chances in her favor of taking it, but she had done what she intended to do; and strictly in accordance with her character, she turned about and marched her victorious army home, leaving a harassing detachment to keep us in constant state of alarm as before, prevent our cultivating the fields, cut us off in a great measure from the blessed water cress that supplemented so happily our fish and mollusc diet, and exhaust us gradually but surely.

During this disastrous engagement, in which I lost five hundred and ninety-one of my best soldiers, and Bara-toma eighty-seven, I was engaged in keeping the gateway in the wall of the city free from an accumulation of rubbish from the fields, chiefly the lettuce stalks of last year's growth; for this introduced had taken complete possession of the fertile fields of the country, while the water-cress invaded the irrigating ditches. This accumulation was caused by the sudden overflowing of the ditches, occasioned by the rampant growth of the blessed cress in many places, and diverting the water from the great artificial channels or conduits beneath the surface, to the natural channel of the chasm in the mountain wall.

On hearing the news of the battle, I quitted the gateway and hastened to the scene of action, but arrived—perhaps, fortunately for myself—after the butchery was over; and having been surrounded by the elevn mothers who had escaped, with exaggerated ideas of the forces of Bara-toma at hand, I returned with them to the city to get the remainder of my army in readiness for the expected assault.

On entering the gate, however, I observed that the accumulation of rubbish had made a little dam there; and I thought, at once, that I could close the gate and barricade it well. I might collect a body of water above the wall in the mountain gap that would bar the invaders effectually.

With a little labor, accordingly the accumulations of rubbish, which had been thrown on each side of the gate to clear the way for the water and the people going in and out, were put again before the opening; and then, having clambered over the pile and passed into the city with my attendants, I had the gate closed and barracaded, as well to complete the dam if the water should continue to flow, as to close the avenue to the enemy.

I then went into the city to do the thousand and one things necessary to calm the excitement which had been produced by the shock of the massacre, to allay the apprehensions of the timid with respect to the expected attack and our means of resistance, and to dispose the remainder of my organized forces in accordance with the plans which I had prepared beforehand. During all which time, I was disturbed by the conflicting reports from the signaling boys on the Arch of Justice; one moment, receiving positive information that Bara-toma was advancing toward the city; the next, that she was going back into the interior; then, that she had divided her army, into an attacking division which was advancing, and a reserve which was hidden from view behind the great tower-tomb.

Besides the boys on the lookout on the great artificial rainbow, I had a company of men stationed there, with a huge pile of stones at hand; for as the invaders necessarily must pass under the arch to enter the city, this easy means of destroying a number of them, by casting the stones down on them, was among the first of my schemes of defending the place.

At length, having concluded the disposition of my troops below, I ascended the long zig zag on the mountain side that led to the top of the arch to see that the company there was at its post and in full force, and to ascertain, if possible, myself, with the aid of the glass, the movements of Bara-toma.

I could see distinctly the harrassing detachment near the mouth of the mountain gap, but after scanning the interior in every direction for miles, I could not detect a single soldier of the vanished army; and I was obliged to accept the belief of the boys that it was in hiding behind the vast tower. From which I concluded that the blood thirsty woman meditated another movement against us; and I was distracted to imagine her design. In fine, I could think of no way of getting into the city from the outside by force; and I was compelled to conclude that the far-seeing woman depended upon spies and traitors in our midst.

Forthwith, I sent the company of little men below, and ordered up a company of women to occupy their important position; and having assigned another duty to the boys, I called up Dora-lana and three of my beautiful atendants whom I could trust implicitly to watch not only the movements of the open enemy in the field, but also and especially the movements of everybody in and about the city—visible from the commanding height; for I was free to express myself without reserve to them that the only possible cause of defeat that I could conjecture was embodied in one or more of the people then in the city; and the only way to obviate this cause was to detect the spy or traitor and turn his treachery against himself.

This done, I cast a gratifying look on a pool of water that was gathering about the gate of the city wall, forming a mirror then that might be a moat a few hours later, and descended to the city, to await impatiently the bursting of the great bud of the warlike situation into the bloom of battle.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

But day succeeded day, and week succeeded week, and the army of Bara-toma was not in sight, and that was all that was known of it; while the menacing detachment remained in view constantly, maneuvering here and there, and receiving supplies from the interior regularly.

In the meantime, the pool above the wall had enlarged to a pond, and the pond to a lakelet that daily drove the harassing regiment a little farther away from the city, and threatened in time to become a lake that would fill the valley back to the divide which separated the most fertile region of the oasis from the comparatively barren depression in which the aperature to the subterranean lake of hot water was situated, and about which Bara-toma had built the capital of her new empire.

I began to be alarmed, too, lest the wall should break and the pent-up waters rush in such volume and with such force through the central part of the city as to sweep it into the harbor; and as I had encountered so many contrarieties since I came into the strange country, that I was prepared to find that the water which drove the enemy away from the city should prove a more destructive foe in the end.

There was a mystery, too, about the causation of the lake; and I sought the only survivor of the College of the Wise Men to get his views on the geologic formation of the peculiar region and the accumulation of the water above the wall.

The old man was feeble and very fearful lest he might say something that would get him into trouble; but after assuring him my protection, he consented to explain to me the formation of the valley, and leave me to infer the cause of the accumulation of the water; from which, I concluded that I in some way was responsible for the latter.

He said, that the theory of the most learned of the geologists of the country, was, that a lake of hot water once filled the area of the most fertile valley of the little polar oasis, and had its outlet through the chasm in the mountain wall. This lake received the overflow of a number of geysers around it; and as the superheated water cooled it deposited the earthly materials which it held in solution along the shores and finally formed a scum over the whole lake; and gradually the scum thickened by innumerable washings from the mountain sides and overflowings of geyser water, and several successive layers of volcanic ashes, and formed a solid crust. The hot water still existed beneath this crust, and caused the equable climate of the country the year round, and still had its outlet through the mountain chasm beneath the superficial crust; and into this outlet those who were executed from the Arch of Justice were plunged through an artificial opening in the crust.

"But," I interposed; "this theory will explain much but not all. There is the stupendous tower tomb, the grandest monument on the

face of the globe, surpassing all the pyramids of Egypt in its inexsuperable size—certainly that has not stood for ages on a crust of a few yards in thickness over a subterranean lake?"

"No, it is built upon a little island that gutted up in the lake. And this, curiously, was composed of pentagonal columns of stone, (basalt,) and, on acocunt of its peculiar structure, it was visited as a natural wonder and used as a place for the deposition of dead bodies long before the people began to encase their dead in sinter—indeed, the natural place for depositing the dead, proving too small in time, and the use of sinter in building having become general, the projecting crag, or former island, through the crust was enlarged by the application of the peculiar material; and in the course of time, it was shaped as you see it today—the artificial being simply accretions to the natural."

"It follows, then, that only the center of the enormous pile rests on a solid foundation, and the outer courses on the crust; and it is possible that the latter some day may sink into the subterranean lake and carry the whole structure down with them.

"It is possible, but not probable; for the center being supported on a solid foundation, and the structure being circular and solidified from base to summit, the weight of the circumference is borne by the central core. It is believed, moreover, that should the tower, from any cause, lean to one side, it would not fall until the smaller circle or the summit would pass beyoynd the greater circle of the base."

I thought of the picture of the leaning Tower of Pisa in the geography of my boyhood, and I was satisfied that the philosophers of the austral region of the earth were as wise as those of the boreal.

"That is all very well," I replied; "but, for the life of me, I cannot infer from anything that you have said, how or why the superficial water should be accumulating now behind the wall in the mountain gap?"

"Oh, I pray you, honored guest, do not question me further—I—I am tottering on the brink of the precipice of death—Let me live the few short measures of my existence without the apprehension of having offended one whom I venerate to a degree that approaches worship—as only a pygmy may regard a giant—and the pitifully weak the marvelously strong!"

Again pledging him my honor that I would not be offended at anything he might say, he timidly enquired, "You have not observed, then, the way in which the irrigating waters of the country are disposed of, after they have circulated through the ditches around and through the fields?"

"I have not," I replied; "but I have been under the impression that the surplus water was carried off in artificial conduits by the side of those which convey the hot and cold water from the interior into the city."

"Then I must tell you that the surplus water is conducted to artificial openings in the crust of the valley and passes through them to the subterranean lake, and thence through the outlet of the lake, of which I have spoken. Now these artificial openings have been closed; and the superficial water having no other escape than through the gap, has accumulated behind the wall, as you see it."

"You mean to intimate, then, that the cunning Bara-toma has closed these openings with a view to create a lake behind our wall of such magnitude as to sweep it way at any moment and destroy the greater

part of the city in its course to thesea? I do not wonder that you were afraid to talk of the terrible woman; for the boldest are awed into servile submission by her overwhelming might and monstrous inhumanity."

"Oh, no—not she, the Mighty Murderess, as the people trembling call her, but—I beg you—"

"The Honored Guest of the Commonwealth! Out with it—out with it; forI am absolutely unconscious of having done anything to bring about the occlusion of these artificial openings and divert the damage of the country into other channels. In what way have I done this?"

"Well, if you will compel me against my will, I will tell you: By introducing the plant which the people now call the Blessing; but which will prove to be the Curse of the country. By the extraordinary rankness of its growth, it has filled the irrigating channels; and the overflowing water has swept all the movable waste of the fields into these artificial openings; and by the accumulation of this material, the holes have become clogged and finally filled and closed; and this overflowing of water must accumulate behind the wall, having no escape, either artificial or natural."

I shuddered at this; for, from the lettuce stalks and the tangled masses of water-cress which I had found in the accumulations of rubbish against the gate—and which I replaced with the greatest care after I had removed them—I realized that the old man was telling the truth, and that I, in despite of all my effort to the contrary, was a curse incarnate to the polar paradise which I had invaded.

And after shuddering, I wept; and while weeping, I took up in my arms the trembling old man and kissed him as I would a little girl whom I had hurt while I hoped to help.

CHAPTER LXXX.

I went back to my palatial residence heart-broken; and when my swarm of beautiful children surrounded me in a general contest of strength and daring and ingenuity for the coveted prize of the first kiss, my kness gave way and I sank among them in a state of collapse.

Sixteen of the seventeen mothers grew almost as weak as myself from sympathy, as they gathered around the children and drew them away in tears from their fainting father; but the seventeenth, the stern and heroic Nada-Nana soon restored me to my strength with a sense of my responsibility and the duties which I must discharge with her calmly and defiantly even in the jaws of death; saying, "You have been to see again one of those little old wise men, as you call them, while they deserve to bec alled the weak and puny and contemptible creatures that they are in peaceful times as well as perilous; and you have come back somewhat bigger in size than they, I must admit, but equally feeble, pound for pound—unmanned, you call it, but I unwomaned. Get up at once; or your daughters will be ashamed of their pusillanimous sire—a mountain in size, but made of mist and continually revealing the watery material of which it is composed by shedding tears! Now, wipe your eyes with the back of your hand, and not with your handkerchief—silk is too precious for such base uses;

and rise without assistance; and if you are unable to know what to do next, I will tell you."

I arose at once; and having put my arms around her, I lifted her completely from the floor and kissed her again and again, till, to secure her release, she vowed that I was not only the biggest and the strongest man in the world but also the bravest and the best!

She was the noblest woman that ever breathed; for having involved her fate with mine, I became a part of her being—an extra arm, if you will; and she exercised over this extra arm the same authority and control which she did over her normal pair or, rather, she endeavored to do so, failing betimes most woefully, as I have related, but succeeding generally as in the present instance.

After this little domestic scene, Nada-nana and I had a consultation on the situation; and after I had explained to her how the water-cress and the lettuce, which I had introduced, were the cause of the accumulation of the water behind the wall, and pointed out to her the imminent danger of the city between the suspended lakelet and the sea—giving her a brief account of the destruction of Johnstown which had occurred the year before I left my native state of Pennsylvania, —we concluded to remove the inner circle of my family to the old whaling vessel in the dry dock and await the inevitable catastrophe there, in the only structure in or about the city of sinter, except the little boats of wickerwork and sinter in the harbor, which would float; and where we might be isolated from the strife of the survivors on the zig zag walk up the mountain side, or wheresoever they might be found. And lest we might alarm the people of the city and incite a scramble for the place of safety, we took possession of the ship in the night and secreted in the hold the shares of the common stores of food to which we were entitled and had in the pantry of my palatial residence, with a generous supply of water in jugs with which we filled a number of the casks still in their proper places aboard, but coated with sinter to insure their preservation.

This done, the following night, I broke in divers places the thin wall of the sinter dock on the side next the harbor, so that with the influx of water, the vessel, rising from its supports, might pass with the returning wave into the harbor and float about there in safety. And while I was engaged in this I had the outer circle of my family brought aboard, with their shares of the public stores of food—the three and twenty former associates of Nada-nana in the government of Revi-lona, with their children.

I also picked the sinter covering from the touch-hole of the cannon in the bow of the vessel, which I had loaded with all the missiles I could find aboard, in order to strike terror to the hearts of the people of the city, but which I was prevented from doing, as I have related; and having readjusted my fire-drill and kindled a flame, I lit one of the ship's lanterns and put it in the special charge of Dora-lana, with instructions how to light a little torch and apply it to the touch-hole in the event of a rush, during my absence, of the panic-stricken people to the ship to come aboard at the critical moment and imperil the lives of my precious children—the inner and the outer circles—and their mothers, which in themselves, I calculated, would sink the ship to the danger line at least.

Then feeling guilty of taking a selfish advantage of the confiding people of the city, I compromised with my conscience by warning the

public of the inevitable destruction of the city by the bursting of the wall which restrained the lake of water about it and now spreading over the whole of the interior as far as they could see from the Arch of Justice, and advised them to ascend the zigzag path on the mountain side which led to the top of the arch and abide there, with their several shares of the public food, until the danger should be passed; telling them frankly, that I had taken possession of the ship, because it belonged to me, as they might take possession of the mountain side, because it belonged to them.

But the people of the city laughed at my words of warning; saying, that, with the exception of the pool directly above the wall, in the gorge of the mountain, the water was so shallow that a man might wade from the great divide to the base of the tower-tomb, and find the water nowhere higher than his hips; and that the water of the deeper pool might go to the harbor and return twice or thrice before the shallow flow over the valley could gather in the gap and rush into the city. And accordingly, none went on the zigzag path, which would have held all the people comfortably, except those whose duty it was to keep watch and ward on the great Arch of Justice, and who were out of danger.

A period of suspense followed this,—in which, perhaps as much to relieve my agitation as to preserve the several articles, I transferred the contents of the museum to the ship and put everything in its proper place, as well as I could—even to the medicine chest and the female apparel in the drawers under the bunk in my cabin.

At length, I was informed by the lookout on the Arch of Justice that a great concourse of people were wading through the shallow water beyond the tower-tomb, carrying bundles on their shoulders, heads and backs. I was alarmed at this intelligence, for I could not imagine any cause for an exodus from the City of the Subetrranean Lake which was in no danger of being flooded, and where an abundance of food was to be had; and I could not conjecture any way of reaching the city for the purpose of attack or refuge without boats, except by the perilous and impracticable route to numbers along the precipitous sides of the mountains to the wall in the gap.

When the head of the column reached the base of the tower-tomb, however, it passed from view; but in a short time, it re-appeared on the spiral way around the stupendous pile, and vanished and appeared again in turn, till it reached the top, followed by the seemingly dismembered sections of a great serpent as the long procession wound round and round the tower from base to summit.

A signal flag then was displayed by the leader of the throng and waved into words, saying, "I, Bara-toma, with a remnant of the once happy people of Revi-lona, in utter destitution and despair, seek aid from the only human being in the world who can give it, the Honored Guest of the Commonwealth, who, involuntarily and in despite of all his efforts to the contrary, has destroyed the perfect government already, and is destroying now the last of the happy people and their lovely land. The damming of the water by the wall in the mountain gap, has destroyed the pit from which for ages the people of the country have obtained an inexhaustible supply of the phosporescent paint in common use, and in special used in our subterranean fishery. And now, without bait, we cannot allure the fish to our nets. Moreover the gradual spread of the water from the City of Maro to the City

of the Subterranean Lake has driven before it all rats of the honored guest of the commonwealth; and they have descended upon the new city in such myriads that they have eaten the last of the mogas and the last of the snails, and forced the people to flee for their lives, bodily attacking them by day and night, and literally devouring the sick and weak and aged alive. Similarly, the roaches of the honored guest have gone before the water; and where the rats were excluded, the insects entered and gnawed the hands and fet of the exhausted people in sleep, and finally their nostrils, lips and eyelids—also literally devouring the sound alive, as the rats the sick. And similarly, the fleas and chinches of the honored guest have fled before the water; and where the roaches were barred, the smaller insects entered and sucked the blood of the survivors of the assaults of the rats and roaches, till, in the extremity of their suffering, they have come to sue for mercy. The flooding of the country was a masterpiece of strategy by he most marvelous of men; and I am proud to acknowledge him my superior in that which distinguishes the imperial leaders of mankind from their followers, the power to make the situation subservient to their design. We have brought with us food sufficient to sustain life for two days without suffering the horrors of hunger; and during this period, we humbly implore the honored guest to drain the lake with which he has overcome us, and permit us to enter the city his slaves."

I was agonized by this message; and being on the zig-zag path of the mountain, four or five hundred yards from the ship, where I could see the top of the tower under the Arch of Justice and make out the signals with my naked eye, I was about to ascend to the top of the arch, in the impulse of the moment, to send a message of sympathy to the forlorn people, with a promise of succor as soon as several of the little boats could be transported from the harbor to the lake, when, to my ineffable amazement and horror, I saw the stupendous pile of the tower-tomb part irregularly in twain, from summit to base, like the opening jaws of the protruding head of an enormous crocodile from the lake, and fall in opposite directions like twin-born avalanches from the sky!

And scarcely had the halves of the colossus tower vanished from my vision, than a mighty column of boiling water rose from the well under the Arch of Justice with a velocity that exceeded the powers of sight to follow the apex pentrating the Hole of Horror and passing beyond a hundred feet or more, and in an instant enveloping in steam a great part of the stupendous structure!

This was the unexpected on a scale of sublimity, of which I had not the faintest suspicion; for water being practically incompressible, the moment the falling tower pressed down the crust of the valley, on the surface of the subterranean lake, the waters of the lake were squirted out of the well under the arch, and also, I doubt not, from all the drainage openings in the valley which had been clogged and closed with the lettuce stalks and other rubbish from the water-swept fields.

Howsoever, the moment I saw the tower fall and the column of water rise, I ran toward the ship at the top of my speed; realizing that, if the dam had not been burst already from the upheaval from below, it would be in a few seconds by waves in the lake, resulting from the great displacement of water by the falling tower in halves; and while I was running, I heard a succession of crashes followed by thunder-like roaring and rumbling which I suppose were the several

reports of the nearer geyser gush under the arch and the farther tower fall, and the conflicting reverberations of the awful sounds!

In the midst of the din, too, I recognized a peculiar rushing and crushing sound in the city; and looking in the direction of the middle thoroughfare, I saw a great wedge of water driving down it, smashing the houses on each side and sweeping the debris of sinter and wickerwork and matting along on the widening sides of the wedge toward the harbor.

I saw also similar wedges of water enter the avenues to the right and left of the middle street and sweep the buildings along them similarly—one of these lateral streams coming almost directly toward me and threatening to cut off my way to the ship.

I might have remained where I was and escaped the fury of the flood; but all my precious children were aboard the vessel, and I had no other thought than to be with them and share their fate.

At length, a few feet in front of the coming flood, I leaped from the last of the laps of the zig zag mountain path to the gently sloping sinter street that led directly to the vessel in the dry dock; and down the avenue I sped like a quarter-horse, seeing, as I ran, a throng of people gathering on the walls of the dock and creating a great commotion aboard. And presently, I saw a group of the mob disappear; and I realized with a shudder that they had broken down the gangway with their weight, and cut off my only means of getting aboard!

No! not my only means; for I might jump!

So, running directly for the gap in the throng which had been made by the breaking down of the gangway, and shouting to Nada-nana, to apprise her of my intention, I leaped across the chasm between the wall of the dock and the side of the vessel, and alighted on the deck, but so insecurely that, had I not been caught by the ready-witted Nona-nana, I would have fallen backward into the dock upon the miserable wretches who had gone down with the broken gangway.

The next instant the waters of the flood were pouring into the dock; and the next, the vessel was swaying and grinding on its supports; then crashing against the opposite side of the dock, from the influx of water; and finally rocking and rolling and striking here and there and threatening to go to pieces within the walls of the reservoir.

I scarcely could keep my feet in the tilting and tossing of the ship, and the shocks resulting from striking the sides of the dock; but somehow in the tumbling and jolting, I saw that the great central rush of the flood had swept an immense pile of debris across the harbor and closed the narrow outlet; that the water was rising rapidly in the harbor; that a great wave had started from the jam at the harbor mouth to make the circuit of the sinter-walled circular bay; and that this great wave in all probability would lift the vessel out of the rock and carry her round the harbor.

And as I expected, the van of the eddy picked up the ship like an empty cockle-shell, and carried her in its circular course around the harbor, with a steadiness of motion that enabled me to survey the scene of destruction with a degree of composure and equanimity in striking contrast with the chaos in commotion around me.

The falling tower had produced a cloud of dust which filled the sky and covered the scene with a fitting pall of ghastly gloom. The mountains loomed up strangely to twice their former height, and seemed to hang above the city side of the harbor. The Arch of Justice,

too, appeared to be surprisingly near; but when I realized that I was floating over the site of the city and not within the circuit of the harbor of old, I recognized the reason for the apparent changes in the relations of the striking landmarks around me and comprehended the magnitude of the catastrophe more fully.

In fine, after scanning every object in sight, I could detect not a single vestige of the city and nothing artificial except the mighty Arch of Justice—in the grandeau and grimness of its significance, as the last of the visible objects of vanishing Revi-lona, a sublimity of warning!

The vessel made the circuit of the harbor twice amid the wreckage of the city, the floating bodies of the inhabitants—eleven thusand, two hundred and eighty-six, in all, and the colossal tortoises, the symbols of the isolated and self-contained commonwealth for ages; and when she had started on her third, and was directly in front of the great arch, Dora-lana, believing that she saw a signal flag on the top of the arch, pointed the staff of the extinguished torch in her hand in the direction of the indistinct or uncertain object in her sight; and in lowering it, she inadvertently knocked off a piece of the half-burned end, which, falling into the touch-hole of the cannon, discharged the gun with a deaffening report.

I happened to see the torch-stick lowered and the end break off, and fall, as I have said; but ignorant of the fact that it contained in its smokeless blackness a spark of fire, I was unprepared for the result and startled greatly—so greatly, that I failed to note the thunder-like reverberation that followed.

Happily, however, I unconsciously remembered what had happened after the discharge of the captain's fowling-piece in the harbor, and looked up at the colossal arch; and fancying that I saw it sway, I cried out, "Look at the Arch of Justice!"

And the words were hardly out of my mouth, when the middle of the stupendous structure started to fall and before it had descended half the distance to the ground below, the massive abutments parted from the mountain walls, and, after solemnly bowing to each other, fell together on the top of the middle section in a crashing crushing mass that seemingly commuted the whole into dust!

The shock of the falling structure to the ground, as well as the great displacement of the air, produced a tremendous wave in the harbor which burst its sinter walls in several places; and with the flood that escaped near the harbor mouth, the vessel was carried out of the harbor and into the great warm current which had borne her—six years before, to the very day—through the icy barrier around the southern pole to the Paradise of Revi-lona; and which presumably would carry her now from the annihilated country through this barrier again to the wide, wide world beyond.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

The marvelous succession of colossal satastrophes transpiring in my sight in the space of a few minutes, while I was in a tornado of excitement and exertion, and pitched and tossed about on the ship, left me in a state of stupefaction, or temporary paresis—dazed and apathetic, as I have seen persons, who have crawled uninjured from a railway wreck, the shock of the collision having benumbed their nervous organizations.

And curiously, the first clear thought that came into my head was a recollection of what the little old wise man had told me about the construction of the stupendous tower-tomb, with a solid foundation in the center only; and then I came to the conclusion that the basaltic core at the base had acted as a wedge to the superimposed structure; and that the moment the accumulated waters of the lake pressed down the floor of the valley and left the unsupported outer circles of the tower saddled on the central wedge, their enormous weight was sufficient to start a split at the point of the wedge and rive the tower from base to summit and cause the halves to part and fall, as I have related—carrying down with them and grinding them into atoms, the Mighty Murderess, and the miserable remnant of the rural population of Revi-lona with whom she hoped to lay the foundations of another government in the isolated polar oasis—an awful, all-involving, and catastrophic death in keeping with her life and character.

I then marveled at the rise of the enormous column of hot water from the subterranean lake through the ever-open well of Eternal Infamy, beneath the Arch of Justice, almost simultaneously with the fall of the tower-tomb and I wondered whether or not this incommensurable geyser gush, by the side of the wall across the mountain chasm, had broken it and liberated the waters of the lake; or whether or not the wave of displacement had swept away the dam; and whether or not the loss of the waters of the lake, by the caving in of the crust of the valley around the tower-tomb, was made up by the outflow under the arch; and whether or not the score or so of people on the arch had been scalded to death before their pulverization in the midst of the general comminution of the mighty masses of the marvelous structure.

Then, strangely, as a smile seemed to crackle the rigidity of my apathetic face, I recollected the celebrated leap of Captain Brady in the early days of the British occupation of the Forks of the Ohio; and I wondered whether it was really greater than mine; concluding in the confidence which I had in my athletic powers, that it was not; that I had made, in fact, the longest leap on level from solid to solid, it was possible for a man to make; and that I never would cease to regret that I had not the affidavit of a score of witnesses to the number of yards and feet and inches, to establish the record for future ages.

Somehow then, I thought of Dora-lana with her torch, worming her way among the excited women and children on the deck, to fire

the loaded cannon; and I wondered whether or not she had extinguished it herself, when she saw that the breaking of the gangway obviated the necessity of discharging the gun to keep back the panic-stricken people; and I concluded that she had done so intentionally; for I knew her to be a wonderfully quick-witted woman.

And this leading my thoughts, as they were awakened from the chaos of my stupefaction, to the noble women who had never wavered in their attachment to me, and who with me, by yielding to the natural instincts of love for the preservation of our species, had been the paramount cause of the disorganization of the government, the destruction of the people and the annihilation of the lovely land of Revi-lona—I marveled that they were not clinging to me now, or standing at my side and staring with me at the receding mountain chasm that notched the horizon and marked the site of their vanished motherland forever.

My eyes filled with tears; and I let them fall from the fading view of the past to the deck of the present, in an emotional chaos of commingled sadness, self-condemnation, and scourging remorse. At length, the paroxysm over, I turned away from the side of the drifting vessel, and found the devoted women, with their children either clinging to them or in their arms, arranged around me in concentric arcs, regarding me in silence with a look of helplessness so abject and hopeless, that I met their gaze only by a determination to relieve them to the last instant of their inevitable annihilation, with all the affection that I could shower upon them, all the sympathy that I could show them without breaking down myself in a torrent of tears, and all the encouragement that I could give them from my nearly exhausted store.

I took them in my arms one after the other and kissed them tenderly; and then, after we had partaken of our scanty stores, we gathered together below in groups for warmth, and spent the night in a gradually deepening despair and a gradually increasing indifference to death.

The following morning, I was uncomfortably cold; but before I had kissed the half of my children and their mothers, I was comfortably warm, and felt exhilarated by the lowering temperature and inclined to be cheerful and hopeful; while they were shuddering and shrinking into the smallest compass possible, incapable of sufficient action to warm the blood, apathetic in the extreme, and falling asleep a moment or two after they had been awakened; and in despite of my efforts to arouse them, and my reluctance to accept the evidence of my senses against the fondest hopes of my heart,I was compelled to recognize the fact that they were freezing to death.

I could not induce any of the mothers to partake of food, except Nada-nana, whom, with her three children, I had held in my arms the livelong night, and to whom I had imparted some of my greater store of animal heat. All the children, however, partaking of the hardihood of their sire, were as wide awake and eager for action and hungry as myself; and in ministering to their wants, and encouraging them to run and romp, I strengthened and cheered myself, and was spared to some degree the heart-rending sight of seeing their tender mothers gradually sink into insensibility of extinction by congelation.

Happily for the children and their sire, morever, on this sad day, the clothing of the sailors was found among the miscellany of the ship's belongings which I had brought from the museum in order to preserve them from the expected flood, as I have related; and all of

the children were enveloped in the woolen jackets, shirts, and howsers and huddled around their mothers in an uproarous childish glee in a most distressing contrast to the icy irresponsiveness of the nodding, shivering women.

The clothing was not sufficient to cover all the women as well as the children, but there was enough for one; and I was partial enough to the mother of my first-born and my last-born, the noble Nada-nana, to envelope her from head to foot in wool; and after putting her infant to her breast, and tucking my first-born and the elder of her brothers—for the last two were boys—as close to her as possible, I put my arms around the group to endure the ordeal of another night.

The following morning, Nada-nana alone, of the forty mothers aboard, was alive.

The next morning, Nada-nana and my first-born were insensible to my kisses; and all the children, save Nada-nana's infant at her breast and his two-year old brother.

And the following morning, the infant alone remained of all the people of Revi-lona—asleep in my bosom and gradually becoming an icicle over my heart.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

The ghastly lonliness of my situation, with the last of my children a lump of ice in my bosom ,and the corpses of the remainder with those of their mothers in groups around me, made little impression on me—barely sufficient to leave a recollection in my mind; for I was in a stupor approximating insensibility at the time the infant died; and a few minutes later, I was in a dreamless sleep.

How long I remained in this condition, I cannot say—a day, perhaps; and when I awoke, I was uncomfortably warm; and having disengaged myself from the fro zenbodies of Nada-nana and her children, I went on deck to ascertain the cause of the sudden rise in the temperature.

I found the ship in an expanse of water so vast that the ragged wall of ice around it was almost lost to sight along the horizon, and so warm as to be hot to my face and hands when I washed them in a bucketfull, dipped for the purpose.

I then ate a hearty meal; and realizing that the dead bodies soon would thaw and decay in the summer heat, I concluded to bring them all on deck, and, after I had taken a farewell look into the faces of all, and kissed the lifeless lips of all, to cast them overboard as quickly as possible, before I should sink in my overwhelming grief and despair. But the day was done when I had laid the last of the bodies on the deck, and the evening had come with a cold so intense, that I concluded to postpone the end of my gruesome work until the morrow.

When the morning came, however, I found that the ship had reentered the narrow channel in the wall of ice, and I could not survive the exposure of an hour on deck. Accordingly, I went below again; and having placed a good supply of food within reach, I wrapped and bundled myself in all the sailors' clothing which, I had removed from

the corpses of my children, and lay down to sleep—to wake again in a warmer region, or not—no matter * * * * *

The warmth of the water beneath and around the hull of the ship penetrated the hold and kept the temperature from falling at any time, perhaps, to zero, of the Fahrenheit thermometer in common use in America; but in inaction, and with unsuitable food for an arctic climate, to say nothing of the thinning of my blood during the six years of my existence in the eternal summer of Revi-lona, I was on the point of perishing with the cold on several occasions: at any rate, I may infer so from the profoundness of my sleep and its duration, little short of hybernation.

At length, I awoke as much perhaps from an unconscious struggle to get sufficiency of pure air, as from a rise in the temperature; and, having risen to my feet with difficulty and staggered to the hatch above the companionway, I could not lift it until after I had filled my lungs several times with fresh air sucked in through the cracks around the covering; and while I was revivifying my blood, I marveled that I had not been asphyxiated in the hold of the vessel; but unquestionably, the heat being the greatest at the bottom of the hold and the cold the greatest above, a series of convection currents was set up by which the air was mixed continually, the contaminated from below and the pure from above, and kept life-sustaining; but when the heat above equaled that below, the convection currents ceased, and the air in the hold became poisonous from the accumulation of carbonic acid gas in the deepest parts.

Howsoever, when I opened the hatch and stepped on deck, I found myself in the midst of a myriad of seabirds—mollimokes, fulmars, gulls, and the like, as nearly as I can say, from my limited knowledge of omithology; and after I had affrighted them into circling flocks in the wildest confusion above my head, by swinging my arms and shouting, I lowered my eyes and looked around me and beheld a scene so ghastly and repulsive that all the horrors which I had witnessed in Revi-lona seemed at once to sink into insignificance! for among the shreds of their clothing, and a gruesome mixture of feathers and filth and hair, the half-eaten corpses of the forty mothers and their ninety-eight children appeared, sending an icy shudder to the very marrow of my bones in an instant and driving me below in an all-involving revulsion of loathing and horror.

I remained in my cabin till nightfall, when, under cover of the darkness, I returned to the deck and cast the skeletons overboard with all the rags and filth about them; and then, having swept and washed the deck, I congratulated myself that I had destroyed the last of visible objects that might recall to my mind the incommensurable misery and the inexauperable destruction of human life which I had caused during the past six years; involuntarily, it is true, and in further extenuation by the force of circumstances of the most extra-ordinary character in the face of which I was absolutely powerless; yet, wilfully or not, and fate compelling or not, I was the burning match that started the conflagration; and being sentient, and capable of feeling sorrow, grief, regret, and remorse in the extreme, I suffered in the extreme; and in my suffering, I rejoiced that an end had come to the awful part with my advent into the open sea again—somewhere in the earth-encircling belt of ocean between the South Pole continent and the Southern Extremities of America, Africa and Australasia.

I realized this from the birds about me; and knowing, moreover, that it was the summer season, and about the period in which I had been caught by the polar current and carried to Revi-lona—the time of the year the whalers frequented the antarctic ocean in search of their mighty prey, I determined to go to the mast head on the morrow and look out for a passing ship.

I did so, accordingly; noting curiously, as I ascended the rigging, that, presumably from the intense cold to which it had been subjected, the sinter covering of the spars and sails had disappeared entirely, as the sinter jugs and other vessels had crumpled into dust in the hold below; but saw nothing from my lookout aloft but sea and sky till nightfall.

The following week or so, similarly, I spent the most of my time aloft, without seeing a sail, but, betimes many whales which encouraged me to persevere until I becacme exhausted from want of food to such a degree that I could not climb the rigging.

I then devoted myself to snaring and trapping the seabirds which followed the ship, and now and then alighted on it in vast flocks; and I soon had a supply at hand to nourish me for a fortnight. At first, I was repelled from eating the several species which I had seen devouring the dead bodies of my children and their mothers; but in a short time, I became so accustomed to the sight of them that I ceased to separate them from their innocent congeners, and ate all alike. At length, for some unknown reason, the birds flew away—possibly to feast on the floating carcass of a whale, after the blubber and bone had been removed from it; and I was reduceed to famine fare, and began to be haunted with the most fantastic visions by day and dreams by night, and so vivid, as to be little short of real to me, like the delusions of insanity.

Finally, in a state of exhaustion physically and delirium mentally, I somehow became conscious that I was surrounded by sailors and the subject of their sympathy and solicitude,—one saying, "Take a pull at this, Jack—it will fetch you to, if anything will;" and "Take a bite of this, Tom—and be a man again, in less than an hour;" and so on.

In fine, during my collapse from starvation, the derelict had been sighted by a whaler and boarded by a boat's crew; and when I recovered my senses fully, I found among my rescuers the former Captain of the vessel! as much astonished at seeing me as I him, if not as happy!

He and his boat's crew, as I afterward learned, had been picked up by a cruising whaler; and ever since, he had been following his profession, and, as the seasons came and went, coming and going to and from his favorite whaling "grounds"—to my good fortune especially, on this occasion.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

The old whaling vessel still being serviceable, Captain Montgomery divided his crew and supplies between the **Southern Cross** and the **Albatross,** and I resumed my former occupation as "doctor," or cook, of the former, for the remainder of the season, with a promise from the good "old man" that I should have a fair share of the catch; and one fine day, after a successful chase, when the Captain and most of the crews of the two ships were gathered on the deck of the **Southern Cross,** I related the story of my voyage to Revi-lona and my adventures there as I have given them here; and while they all accepted the narrative as truthful, I was not disposed to cavil at a cross-examination by the several "lawyers" who are to be found in every good ship's crew.

In the end, the Captain said "It isa wonderful story of wonders, regard it as you will; either, as a fine-spun fantasy of the phenomena of the austral polar region with the extremes of temperature here and there in the closest fuxtaposition, many-hued masses of ice like floating mountains of precious gems, and vast volcanoes with all their marvelous belongings; or, as a matter-of-fact relation, such as only the prince imperial of all the fishermen of the world, a whaler, can make, in the artlessness of his rugged nature, engaged eternally, as well as internally, in a life-and-death struggle with a dough-jehovah! But I accept it as the latter; for it is infinitely easier for me to believe every detail of it, than to believe that my old ship has been a derelict on the vast expanse of the anarctic ocean, summer and winter for six years, and that a human being has been able to live alone on her during that period, subsisting on seabirds, as we found him."

To this the sailors assented; but, I believe, rather from habit in accepting the word of the Captain as conclusive in everything, than from understanding: for the captain's speech when excited was a sea that contained strange sails to all.

Howsoever, on this occasion, an exception was found in one of the "lawyers", a grim old barnacle, with an amazing sea of knowledge in his noggin and a boundless ocean of good humor under his jacket, who, curiously, went by the name of "Goosie" among his associates—Goosie remarking, as if he had not heard the Captain at all, "It is the spiciest South Sea yarn that ever was spun in a galley, especially the ride around the country on the back of the moga, and making the acquaintance of all the governesses in succession; and I for one accept it for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as the lawyers say, because it stands to reason, and accords with my experiences in the world in general and among women in particular. But there are several phenomena which I would like to have explained a little more fully, before I lie down to sleep, lest I continue to puzzle my poor wits about the matters, and get no sleep.

"The first is a penomenon of human nature, Why did not the governesses and your fifteen beautiful attendants become jelous of one another, and pull one another's hair, and the like?"

"For the reason," I replied, "that the passion of jealousy is not developed until the passion of love has been called into being; and in a country where love had been suppressed for ages, jealousy had been suppressed similarly. Moreover, jealousy is an expression of selfishness; and in the communistic realm of Revi-lona, selfishness was extinguished at the time the foundations of the communwealth were laid. Further, when the disorganization of the government set in and the demoralization of the people, jealousy also came into being, as evidenced in the revolt of the women generally that the governesses had a monopoly of the most marvelous of men; and the actions of the barren but loving Bara-toma were the resultants of her jealousy as well as envy of her associates. So, the sterilized governess who administered to me the peculiar poison, may be said to have done so as well through jealousy as envy and revenge."

"That is conclusive with respect to what I termed a phenomenon in human nature. Now, the second is a meteorologic—Why were not fogs developed everywhere by the hot currents coming into contact with the ice, just as we see them here and everywhere on the surface of the globe where there is heat on the one hand and cold on the other and water between?"

This seemingly was a natural perversion, while, in fact, it was one of the most irrefragable of the proofs of the meteorologic correctness of my relation as the evolution of jealousy after the evolution of love was, of the anthropologic; and I was about to explain the matter philosophically to the satisfaction of the most captious, when one of the wags interposed and relieved me from saying a word, by his facetitiousness.

"Hold, honored guest of the commonwealth, and let me answer Goosie according to his goosiness, as Shakespeare says," Jackie gravely said. "You see, as Goosie himself has said, here was the ice on the one hand, and here was the hot water on the other, and here should have been the fog between, but there was none; just as, once upon a time, as my granny used to begin all her parables, here was a haystack on the one hand, and here was another on the other hand, and here should have been the cow between them, but she died, because she could not make up her mind as to whiche to eat first!"

At which all the sailors shifted their quids to the other side, and nodded assent; and thereupon the Captain invited all hands to join with him in drinking the health of the Honored Guest of the two old whalers—whether or not of the Commonwealth of Revi-lona with a hearty wish that he might have better luck next time, when he attempts to raise a family.

All hands joined in this, of course; and to bring my story to a conclusion, it is necessary for me to say only, that the whaling cruise was successful; and out of the catch, my share was sufficient to send me back from the Yankeeland of the South to the Yankeeland of the North, as big and brawny as I had gone away, but a wiser, a sadder, and a better man, for my peculiar polar experiences.

THE END.